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INSIDE

VIRTUE OF THE WEEK

REVERENCE
“May obedience conquer disobedience within this house, and may peace triumph over discord here, and generous giving over avarice, reverence over contempt.”
The Yasna 60:5
See Page 13

Local

CUC admits existence of MOA but...

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board chairman Herman P. Sablan has admitted the existence of a Memorandum of Agreement with a Korean firm on desalination project prior to solicitation, but said that it had been nullified when the utility firm issued a Request for Proposal over a month ago.

In an interview, Sablan said that an MOA was signed with Taekwang Heavy Industries because no other companies were interested in the project.

“When they first introduced the unsolicited proposal, the board made that decision, but then after that, other companies came in wanting to participate so we disregarded the MOA and proceeded with an RFP,” said Sablan.

This, after Saipan Rep. Stanley Torres delivered a privilege speech Thursday question-

ing the method by which CUC was going about the project’s RFP process.

Torres, complete with a mask to illustrate what he said was “a smelly odor emitting” from some CUC board members while delivering his speech, disclosed that an MOA between CUC and Taekwang was prepared and must be executed sometime in July 2003, or before the RFP was requested publicly in September 2003.

The lawmaker claimed that the desalination contract was a “sweetheart deal” and that information on the dealings was privy only to some and not all CUC board members.

Torres moved last week for an oversight hearing on the project.

For his part, Sablan said that he wished that Torres had been “more professional,” even as he justified his position favoring Taekwang’s proposal.

Taekwang, among four proposers, was ranked No. 1 for its responsiveness by a

CUC evaluation team.

Sablan said that instead of criticizing the CUC, Rep. Torres should have directed his remarks to the government, particularly the Legislature, which he said, has done nothing to provide a 24-hour water supply on Saipan.

“He should have directed it to the government, to themselves because they have been there for a long time now but nothing has been done to fix the water supply problem,” he said.

Sablan’s bloc, composed of vice chair Frank Q. Guerrero and Laura Manglona, failed last week to pass a motion—an intent to approve the contract to Taekwang.

Three other board members voted against the proposal: Joseph Torres, Velma Palacios, and Rufina Miles.

Taekwang, according to authorities, would bind the CUC into a \$136.9-million deal for 15 years based on a \$7.98 per 1,000 gallons of water at 3 million gallons a day.

Wiseman allowed to sit on federal court bench

The U.S. Courts for the Ninth Circuit has allowed CNMI Superior Court judge David Wiseman to sit for the federal court bench on Saipan.

Ninth Circuit Chief Judge Mary M. Schroeder made the designation for calendar year 2004.

“I hereby designate the Honorable David A. Wiseman from the Commonwealth Superior Court to hold district court in the [federal] district of the NMI during the period beginning January 1, 2004, and ending December 31, 2004, and for such additional time required in advance to prepare for the trial of cases, or thereafter as required to complete unfinished business,” Schroeder said.

The designation allows Wiseman to sit on the federal

court bench in lieu of Chief Judge Alex R. Munson’s unavailability. Wiseman has been sitting as judge on some cases pending before the federal court.

Some months ago, Wiseman also attended the National Judicial College, a non-profit judicial training center within the University of Nevada in Reno. The NDC had said in a media release that Wiseman served as discussion leader for the Criminal Evidence Course held at the college.

“The focus of Criminal Evidence is to provide judges with the knowledge to make evidentiary rulings quickly and confidently in criminal cases. Participants learn to summarize the rules of relevancy; define the defini-

tions for the admissibility of criminal evidence; define the rules regarding confessions and admissions; and compare hearsay exceptions,” stated the College.

According to NDC, it has awarded over 61,000 professional judicial education certificates, since it was founded in 1963. Offering about 85 courses yearly, it said over 2,700 judges from across the U.S. enroll annually.

The college’s thrust is to improve the administration of justice through national programs of education and training that will enhance judicial proficiency, competency and productivity. (John Ravelo)



Wiseman

PREL to broadcast in Asia

Pacific Resources for Education and Learning will broadcast educational programming to Asia by satellite. The Honolulu-based nonprofit has formed a strategic partnership, PRELSat, with Mabuhay Philippines Satellite Corporation and Hawaii-Pacific Teleport.

Through PRELSat, the new partnership will deliver affordable distance learning to the Asia Pacific education community. More information about PRELSat is available online at www.prelsat.org.

With more than 10 years experience providing distance learning to a variety of clients, PREL has developed an extensive inventory of quality education programming. Through a delivery approach that combines distance learning with face-to-face support, PRELSat will provide customized learning packages to meet specific needs for both formal and infor-

mal education. End-users include homes, communities, schools, and health centers.

Mabuhay Philippines Satellite Corporation, a unit of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company, owns and operates the Agila II satellite. Hawaii-Pacific Teleport, which operates out of Kapolei, will provide uplink and turnaround services between the Americas and Asia.

With a footprint that covers Hawaii and most of Asia, Agila II can reach large numbers of end users in multiple locations. Satellite delivery provides affordable solutions for K-12 school systems seeking to complement classroom instruction or to provide standardized instruction and curricula to remote locations at any time of the day, month, or year. (Pacific Magazine/PINA)

Rain leaves Saipan wet

Occasional rain dampened Saipan’s roads yesterday, prompting the Emergency Management Office to issue a special weather advisory cautioning motorists.

Rain showers continued early last night, just as the EMO cited an afternoon forecast.

“A shear line is draped across the Mariana Islands, producing a band of scattered showers, heavy at times, and thunderstorms until this evening,” the advisory said. “Another near gale trade winds north and east

of Marianas will keep hazardous surf for our waters through at least Tuesday.”

The EMO cautioned motorists to be watchful of flooded areas, the slippery roads and low visibility during rainfall. As of press time, there was no major vehicular accident reported.

The EMO also cautioned fishermen and beachgoers to take extra precaution when going near the reef line due to dangerous surf and current. (John Ravelo)

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UNITED NATIONS

Wearing their favorite costumes, Grace Christian Academy kindergarten students join the campus Mission Convention and United Nations parade Friday morning.

LIBERTY DONES

SGMA assists congressional group

Visiting congressional staffers were accommodated this past Thursday when Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association officials arranged for factory tours at SGMA member-companies, and then met with Washington Rep. Pete A. Tenorio who coordinated the visitors' schedule while on Saipan.

Christopher A. Foster, professional staff member, Office of Native American & Insular Affairs in the House Resources Committee, for Majority chairman Richard Pombo; and Anthony M. Babauta, Democratic legislative staff for Insular Areas with Minority House Rep. Nick Rahall toured United International Corporation and Sako Corporation.

Also on the tours were Washington Rep. Tenorio and Meredith Beaton of Podesta Mattoon, from Washington DC.

SGMA chairman James C. Lin and executive director Richard Pierce briefed the visiting delegation Wednesday night and Thursday during the tours on matters about the Saipan apparel manufacturing industry.

The latest Saipan Apparel Industry Report also was provided for the committee staffers' review.

At a Friday SGMA general membership meeting, Tenorio addressed the full association membership on matters in Washington and on the purpose of the House Resources Committee delegation's visit to Saipan.

Tenorio told the group that

this visit—or possible future visits—is a prerequisite to any House Committee decision on the CNMI's attempt to seat a non-voting delegate in the House committee itself.

The CNMI Resident Representative further touched on subjects ranging from the current status of minimum wage efforts

in Washington DC, the committee delegate bill itself, possible changes in trade and tariff extensions to the CNMI, and further visits to the CNMI by the House of Representatives early next year.

The House delegation left Saipan on Friday, Nov. 14, 2003.

NMI fails to obtain investment grade rating for proposed \$40-million bond

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

Due to the CNMI government's failure to achieve an investment grade rating, it has to pay additional interest costs of about \$19 million over 30 years with its proposed \$40-million land compensation bond.

The Commonwealth Development Authority presented this scenario as it informed Gov. Juan N. Babauta in a letter last month that it "will pursue the closing of a non-rated, uninsured general obligation bond."

This is a result of the CNMI's failure to obtain an investment grade rating from rating agencies, which CDA officials said was influenced by two deciding factors: the general fund deficit and unfunded liability of the retirement program.

"Until these issues are substantially addressed, CNMI cannot expect an investment grade rating for a GO. bond," CDA executive director Mary Lou S. Ada and CDA board chairman Sixto K. Igisomar told the governor.

This, they said, even as all the rating agencies "were impressed with the progress that the CNMI had enjoyed despite some very negative external events."

Further, they said that "the inability to achieve an investment grade rating also prohibits



Ada

the CNMI from obtaining insurance on the bonds."

This will raise the interest costs substantially, they said.

Based on an underwriter's estimate, they said that the cost of a non-rated, uninsured bond would be \$18 million to \$19 million in additional interests over 30 years.

The CDA officials noted that the situation had been discussed with the Department of Finance, which they said concurred that "the cost increase is substantial, but it remains feasible."

They said that the only option to receiving the target rating involves a substantial amendment to the existing legislation to ensure "a sufficient, dedicated funding source to offset the negatives previously mentioned."

But they warned that this step would create a delay of one to two months following the pas-

sage of any legislation.

"Given the immediate need for funding, CDA will pursue the closing of a non-rated, uninsured general obligation bond," they said.

The CDA hopes to close the bond middle of December 2003.

The Bond Act provides that the CDA, at the request and after consultation with the Marianas Public Lands Authority, is authorized to incur a debt of up to \$40 million in aggregate amount of general obligation bonds of the CNMI for the purpose of completing the acquisition of various parcels of land.

This, as MPLA commissioner Henry S. Hofschneider earlier expressed concern over the delay in the funding, saying that that the works involved in the preparation for land claim files may be jeopardized since they "are good for a certain point of time only."

"We may do it again, and this means new spending for the MPLA," said Hofschneider, adding that at least 70 land claim folders are now ready for offer pending the release of the bond money.

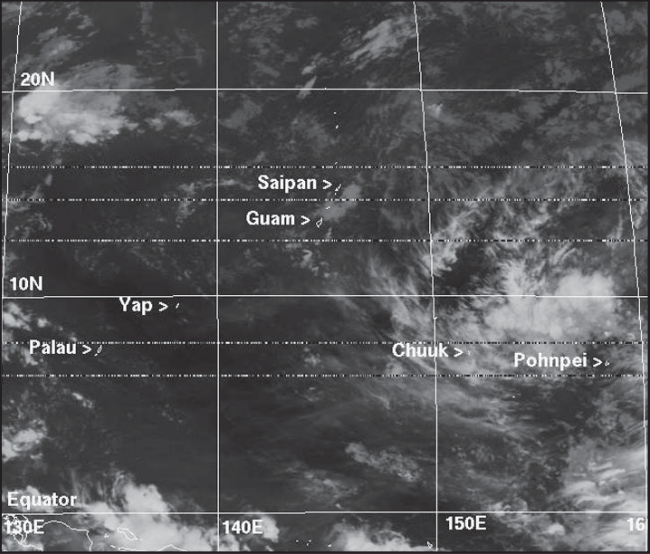
The MPLA had originally thought of getting land compensation money by December 2002.

Meantime, CDA noted that the CNMI rating of "middle double B area" is approximately two steps above Guam and two (steps) below the investment grade.

POKER

From Page 1


WEATHER FORECAST




PICTURE TIME: 1:00 A.M., DECEMBER 1, 2002
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.
A monsoon trough stretches across Micronesia and extends from near 7n130e southeastward to near 4n140e to 7N155e to a circulation near 4n166e and continues to 3n180. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with the trough and the circulation can be found between 7n and 10n from 150e to 160e and between the Equator and 7n from 158e to 180. This area includes portions of Chuuk and Pohnpei States...Kosrae States...and southern portions of the Republic of the Marshall Islands as well as the Northwestern Kiribati.
The remnants of an old shear line are producing an area of scattered showers and a few thunderstorms well to the northwest of Palau and Yap near between 12n and 15n from 130e to 132e.




SAIPAN & TINIAN
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: East @ 15 mph. with gusts to 25 mph.
Temperature: Highs near 87. Lows near 77.




GUAM & ROTA
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers
Winds: East @ 15 mph. with gusts to 25 mph.
Temperature: Highs near 87. Lows near 77.




PALAU
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: East @ 10 kt.




POHNPEI
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast @ 10-15 kt.




YAP & ULITHI
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: East @ 10-15 kt.






















KOSRAE
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers & isolated thunderstorms.
Winds: Northeast @ 10 kt.



CHUUK
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast @ 10 kt.



MAJURO
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast @ 15-20 kt.

CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW
 Auckland	Cloudy	71F (22C)	60F (16C)
 Beijing	Partly Cloudy	50F (10C)	34F (1C)
 Hong Kong	Rain	79F (26C)	71F (22C)
 Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	83F (28C)	67F (19C)
 London, England	Rain	47F (8C)	39F (4C)
 Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	66F (19C)	47F (8C)
 Manila	Partly Cloudy	88F (31C)	71F (22C)
 Melbourne	Sunny	74F (23C)	55F (13C)
 Miami	Partly Cloudy	78F (26C)	68F (20C)
 New York City	Partly Cloudy	40F (4C)	31F (-1C)
 Osaka	Rain	52F (11C)	40F (4C)
 Paris	Rain	47F (8C)	35F (2C)
 Pusan	Sunny	56F (13C)	40F (4C)
 Rome	Partly Cloudy	57F (14C)	40F (4C)
 Salem, Oregon	Partly Cloudy	46F (8C)	34F (1C)
 San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	60F (16C)	45F (7C)
 Seoul	Partly Cloudy	49F (9C)	39F (4C)
 Tokyo	Rain	53F (12C)	50F (10C)
 Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	38F (3C)	34F (1C)

Theories cropping up on Torres’ office raid

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

“I won’t be surprised if I’m next.”

Thus said opposition senator Pete Reyes, who joined House Rep. Stanley Torres in accusing new Attorney General Pamela Brown of plotting the raid on the congressman’s offices Thursday noon.

Like Torres, Reyes and his



Reyes

bloc at the Senate have been critical of the new AG.

When Reyes’ group took over the Senate leadership months ago, it junked the committee report endorsing the confirmation of Brown as AG.

But soon after Senate President Paul Manglona regained actual majority number at the Upper House after the elections, his bloc adopted the same committee report in a session on Rota without the presence of Reyes’ group. Reyes had questioned the validity of Brown’s confirmation.

Reyes said he is exploring the possibility of initiating a legal move to unseat Brown, who was recently sworn into office by CNMI Supreme Court Chief Justice Miguel Demapan.

“I personally feel that this [raid on Torres’ offices] is a retaliation from Pam Brown [against] people who are vocal against her,” Reyes said. “I won’t be surprised if I’m next, but I welcome any inquiry.”

The opposition senator stressed, though, that Brown’s office would not be able to find any wrongdoing on how he conducts his office.

Operatives from the AGO and the Office of the Public Auditor, together with some policemen, raided Torres’ offices at the Legislature to collect evidence over the congressman’s alleged employment of a ghost worker.

The allegation against Torres is similar to the fraudulent scheme that led to the conviction and imprisonment of ex-senators Ricardo Atalig and Jose M. Dela Cruz. Operatives conducted the raid Thursday noon shortly after obtaining a search warrant from

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth Govendo.

Reyes pointed out that the raid was conducted just days after the chief justice swore Brown in as AG, branding the raid as “pure retaliation.”

He clarified, though, that he did not meet with his party mates—including Thomas Villagomez—whose name had cropped up in the controversy involving Atalig and Dela Cruz.

Villagomez had allegedly hired Atalig’s wife, Rosita, who reportedly did not perform actual work.

Brown tersely denied having knowledge of the raid.

CNMI chief prosecutor David Hutton also belied Torres’ allegation that Brown had a hand in the raid, saying the OPA began its independent investigation even before Brown became AG. According to Hutton, the OPA just recently turned in the outcome of the investigation to the AGO.

Hutton and Assistant Attorney General Karen Severy co-signed the affidavit by OPA criminal investigator Richard Lamkin, which became the basis for the issuance of the search warrant on Torres’ offices.

Lamkin accused Torres of employing Dorothy Sablan as a ghost employee. He said Sablan received CNMI paychecks via direct deposit to the Bank of Guam and the First Hawaiian Bank.

“Investigation reveals that Dorothy Sablan has been paid for at least 280 hours of work recorded as if she was on-island even though she was off-island without being on administrative, annual or sick leave time,” Lamkin stated in the affidavit.

Sablan, Torres’ former office manager, had also allegedly illegally received government monies pertaining to 16 hours of holiday pay, according to Lamkin.

Lamkin said there is probable cause to believe that the crimes committed were: theft by deception, fraud, official misconduct, conspiracy to commit theft/fraud and obstruction of justice. The investigator also cited possible violations of the CNMI Ethics Act.

Lamkin disclosed that the investigation stemmed from an anonymous telephone call made to the OPA last Aug. 20, just days after the sentencing of Atalig to 63 months in federal imprisonment. He said the caller tipped that Sablan was receiving full-time pay as if she was working in the CNMI, even if she had spent the previous two months in Seattle.

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Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Flash of honesty

A glimmer of a change in Bush administration immigration policy appeared, not at a press conference or in a major speech but in an off-the-cuff remark during a town hall meeting in Miami earlier this month. Asked there about proposed immigration legislation, Tom Ridge, secretary for homeland security, replied that he thought Americans needed to “come to grips with the presence of 8 to 12 million illegals, afford them some kind of legal status.” Mr. Ridge was not, it seems, any more specific than that—and “some kind of legal status” can mean many things.

Nevertheless, his comments unleashed a mini-storm of abuse, as well as a rather unclear White House clarification. Last week President Bush declared himself firmly against “blanket amnesty” but called for an immigration policy that “helps match any willing employer to any willing employee,” whatever that means. Although rumor has it that the president intends to propose legislation that would expand the use of temporary visas, which would help bring undocumented workers out of the illegal economy, senior administration officials will not confirm or deny it.

The ambiguity is bipartisan: Howard Dean, when asked about his immigration policies by the Arizona Republic last week, at first said that he was critical of guest-worker legislation but then declared himself in favor of many of the principles embodied in the bills he said he disliked.

All of these ambiguous statements come in a context: a growing feeling among businesses, politicians and, most important, those who care about homeland security that the current de-facto tolerance of mass numbers of illegal immigrants is no longer acceptable. It's long been clear that living in a legal shadowland exposes such people to exploitation. Now, at a moment when the nation's terrorism alert level once again has been raised to orange, attention is being paid to the security implications of an enormous, undocumented population that creates a market for fake documents and Social Security numbers and supports an enormous people-smuggling industry as well.

Some progress has been made: Beginning in January, the United States will begin to issue higher-tech visas. The Department of Homeland Security also claims it has stepped up its cooperation with states to ensure they keep closer control over the issuance of driver's licenses. Nevertheless, advocacy groups last week published a study showing that the administration had failed to complete a dozen other planned border security improvements.

And no one yet seems prepared to deal with the root cause of the problem. Mr. Bush's plans for immigration reform were derailed by the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, but the past two years have provided even more evidence that the current system is not working and that change is needed. A number of immigration bills proposing various forms of temporary visas and registration of illegal immigrants are under discussion in Congress—although the one with the most bipartisan support has been derailed by a Republican Senate subcommittee. The ambiguity helps no one: Democratic candidates should clarify their views, the president and his party should stop their infighting and Congress should get to work on legislation that can be passed as soon as possible.

The Washington Post



‘Napalmed Girl’ on an aid mission

By KIM PHUC
Los Angeles Times

As Congress and the White House begin to set priorities for next year's budget, I ask policy-makers in Washington not to forget the little girl in the famous photograph running down a road to escape napalm fire in Vietnam.

I am that girl, and my life changed forever that day.

I lost two cousins and many friends in that bombing 31 years ago during the Vietnam War. Sixty-five percent of my body was burned, and I had to endure many surgeries. For many years I also lost my ability to trust. I was filled with anger and bitterness toward my government, toward Americans, toward anyone who was “normal.”

My mother was caring throughout this ordeal, but she was also tough, telling me: “You have to realize the whole world is not going to pity you. You must make a change and get through this.”

I might not have made it if my mother had not taught me that lesson.

My journey into adulthood took me from Vietnam to Cuba and finally to Canada, where in 1992 I began to confront my past and make a new home and a new life for myself. Along the way, many doctors and caring individuals helped me, the first being Nick Ut, the Associated Press photographer who took the picture and rushed me to a hospital, saving my life.

I am happy now because I can experience love, peace and forgiveness. As a teen-ager, I thought I would never have children. I thought no one would ever love me or want to touch me. But now I am married and have two beautiful sons.

I was fortunate to have had so many help me, and I always wanted to use my experience to help others. That is why I started my foundation for children caught in war's cross-fire.

There are millions of children who have been traumatized by war. In some countries—such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo—it is rare to find a child not affected by war. Many children, hurt physically and psychologically, may never recover without extensive help.

Over the last century, the nature of war has changed dramati-

cally. Today, 90 percent of war's casualties are civilians, most of them women and children, according to the United Nations. During the 1990s, more than 2 million children were killed in armed conflicts. About 4 million more survived with physical mutilation, and more than 1 million were orphaned or separated from their families.

Humanitarian assistance to women and children caught in armed conflicts should be a top priority. But, unfortunately, this is not the case.

Though the United States for years has provided food, medical care and shelter to civilians affected by war, it has not done nearly enough to help protect women and children from the attendant horrors of war, such as rape and mutilation, prostitution, forced recruitment of children into the military, psychological trauma, family separation and physical abuse in refugee camps.

To help change this, I am working with Save the Children and dozens of other humanitarian organizations to persuade Congress to provide greater protections for women and children in war and conflict zones.

Last October, the Senate approved an amendment to the foreign operations spending bill that would require the U.S. government to develop an integrated strategy for addressing these issues. It also would prohibit federal aid to any humanitarian agency that had not adopted a code of conduct to protect beneficiaries from sexual exploitation and abuse.

The amendment is a good first step toward enacting the broader protections included in the Women and Children in Conflict Protection Act—a bill introduced last spring that would provide \$45 million in new funding to help women and children suffering from the ravages of war and conflict. On behalf of millions of war victims like myself worldwide, I ask the administration and Congress to support the entire protection act.

The legislation would not end wars or the terrible suffering of so many women and children, but at least it would recognize that they should come first, not last, when the United States responds to war and its terrible aftermath.

Phuc is founder of the Kim Phuc Foundation.

He flew as a pioneer; I fly in a panic

By **ANDY MOSHER**
The Washington Post

Though it went unmentioned—and probably unnoticed—during the recent festivities at Kitty Hawk, N.C., the centennial celebration of manned flight marked not one but two milestones. Orville Wright’s first flight on Dec. 17, 1903, not only began the era of air travel in powered, heavier-than-air craft. It also marked the beginning of nearly five years in which not a single human life would be lost in a plane crash—a span unmatched over the next 95 years.

Granted, the skies weren’t as crowded then as they are today. Flights were separated by weeks and months rather than seconds, and commercial aviation was but a distant dream. Yet it still seems remarkable that four years and 10 months would pass before, on Sept. 17, 1908, at Fort Myer near the Potomac, an airplane crash would claim its first victim.

The pilot in that first fatal crash was Orville Wright—not as surprising as it might seem when the limited number of pilots at that time is taken into account. But Wright was not the victim. Though hospitalized for seven weeks with a broken thigh, several broken ribs, a back injury and serious cuts and bruises, Wright lived to fly again.

Less fortunate was Wright’s passenger, Lt. Thomas E. Selfridge. An aviation pioneer in his own right, Selfridge was one of five Army officers assigned to observe Wright and his airplane and recommend whether the War Department should move toward adding air power to its arsenal. Wright and Selfridge had been aloft for not quite five minutes that afternoon when a propeller malfunctioned and nicked a guy wire in the plane’s rigging, sending the craft out of control. It plummeted about 200 feet into the packed earth of the Fort Myer parade ground. Selfridge, his skull fractured by the plane’s engine, underwent emergency surgery but died that evening without regaining consciousness.

I know all this because Selfridge was my great-uncle, my grandmother’s kid brother. He died nearly 50 years before I was born, and any relatives who knew him have passed on as well. But the stories of Uncle Tom have been handed down through the generations. To me his career embodied the paradox of human flight: It is a romantic, intriguing miracle of engineering, but it is also fraught with peril and should be avoided whenever possible.

Selfridge, of course, would not share the darker half of my view of flying. By all accounts, he loved flying with a passion.

A native of San Francisco, he graduated from West Point in the same year that the Wright brothers made their first flight. Within four years, he had persuaded the Army—and President Theodore Roosevelt—to attach him to a group that was performing aviation research in Nova Scotia under the direction of Alexander Graham Bell. Soon, he was expert at flying gliders, dirigibles and airplanes. He was the most experienced and knowledgeable man in the Army when it came to aviation. And by the age of 26, he was dead.

The fact that the first fatal air crash involved the world’s pre-eminent pilot and took the life of another giant of early aviation always reminds me of one thing about aviation that will never change: No matter how safe flying becomes, or how much skill and training the person at the controls possesses, it’s still a long way down.

We learned that again last week when scores died in a jetliner crash in West Africa and six Air France flights were canceled for fear they’d be hijacked for terrorist attacks.

There’s no getting around it. The laws of logic and gravity dictate that the cost of advancing the science of aviation be measured at least partly in human lives. And someone had to be the first to die. But it seems ironic that that initial victim should be someone so devoted to flying, someone so deeply involved in its development. Nor is it fitting that Selfridge, who probably never imagined that he would be flying’s first casualty, leaves a legacy that is entirely at odds with his character.

As surely as the Wright brothers introduced us to flying, Selfridge left us with the fear of flying.

While it’s safe to assume that the notion of flying has terrified a sizable portion of humanity since the dawn of time, it was a theoretical fear until the Wright brothers made flying a reality in 1903. Five years later, Selfridge—with a big assist from Orville and his faulty propeller—made the perils of flight equally real.

Those perils have diminished over time, relative to the frequency with which people fly and the vast distances they cover. Flying, we are constantly reminded, is safer than driving. As a result, nearly a century after Selfridge’s passion for flying made it the focus of his life and the cause of his death, I can spend vastly more time in the air than he ever did—and hate every minute of it.

I’ve always been deathly afraid of flying. It’s not because I’ve listened to tales of my great-uncle’s demise practically since I was born. I wish the reason were that simple. In fact, I can’t really explain why I approach every airline voyage with dread and endure it in terror or inebriation—sometimes both. To the best of my knowledge, I’ve never had a brush with death in the course of countless flights. Whether in a DC-3 flying from Miami to the Florida Keys or in a 747 bound from New York City to Johannesburg, I’ve never experienced a temporary loss of cabin pressure or had to use my seat cushion as a flotation device. My fear defies explanation, it defies reason, it defies my best efforts to put it behind me.

That, for me, is the ultimate irony associated with the short life and violent death of Lt. Thomas E. Selfridge. By doing what he loved and dying in the process, he helped to nurture the science of aviation, so that some day his sister’s youngest grandchild could fly safely. Yet that grandchild still views flying with much the same terror that gripped hundreds of Washingtonians as they watched a fragile biplane plummet to Earth 95 years ago.

Sorry, Uncle Tom, but it’s still a long way down.

The author is a deputy foreign editor of The Post.

Letters to the Editor

Saipan Tribune welcomes contributions. All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name, address and, if possible, fax or telephone number. Letters are edited for space, clarity and fairness.

Leave the past behind

Christ has come. The savior is born. We describe the birth of Jesus Christ as an occasion full of love and joy. Christmas is the season of generosity and family togetherness. Many of us live our daily lives without fully understanding the real meaning of Christ. We do things to one another, be kind to one another, be generous with each other, and be able to trust and rely on each other. Instead, we tend to hurt each other out of hatred and envy. Perhaps we act the way we do because we are ignorant, selfish, blind or simply foolish. Christ taught us to “do unto others what you want others to do unto you.”

The research of our family tree by Mr. Guerrero, the chairman of the Board of Education, mentioned that the Sablan, Camacho, Dela Cruz, and De Leon Guerrero families are some of the largest families in the Commonwealth. I am a descendant of both the Camacho and Dela Cruz families. However, this is not as important as the understanding that all of us share a common humanity. It is through our birth, our blood, and the reality of sharing a common humanity that we are told to “do unto others what you want others to do unto you.”

The islands of Rota and Tinian are both disadvantaged by their limited natural resources, geological location, and population. Many infrastructures are not in place to enable them to stand on their own two feet. On the other hand, the 80-20 movement is a product of hate, vengeance, and envy. I understand that our leaders are not perfect and many times I disagree with what they are doing. The 80-20 idea is not the direction that we should follow either. For those people who are inclined to follow the 80-20 idea, remember that whatever steps you take that come from hate and vengeance, you do unto yourself as well. The people of Tinian and Rota are our brothers that need assistance. We are one family and one community of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Christ teaches us to be generous to our brothers and to love one another as a family. Let us all move forward and leave the past behind us.

Francisco M. Atalig
Northern Marianas

A tribute to a saint-to-be: Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa described herself as, “By blood, I am Albanian. By citizenship, an Indian. By faith, I am a Catholic nun. As to my calling, I belong to the world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to the Heart of Jesus”. Because of what she did during her eighty-seven year lifespan, people of all denominations have considered her to be qualified for sainthood. The Catholic Church and Pope John Paul waived the normal five-year waiting period subsequent to less than two years following her death in 1997 and allowed the immediate opening of her canonization cause in early 1999.

For over seventy years, Mother Teresa served God, the Catholic Church, and poor people all over the world. She began her service as a missionary with the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, known as Sisters of Loreto, in Ireland in 1928 at the age of 18.. During her 20-year tenure at St. Mary’s, she taught and became the school’s principal in 1944. Several years later in 1946, she established the Missionaries of Charity, a religious community dedicated to the service of the poorest of the poor. For the next forty years, Mother Teresa established over 610 congregations and foundations of the Missionaries of Charity in 123 different countries all over the world. Her following of Sisters numbered in excess of 4,000 prior to her death in 1997.

The most astounding accomplishment of the blessed nun was her success in opening congregation houses in almost all of the communist countries, including the former Soviet Union, Albania and Cuba. What made her stand out was her incredibly uncanny ability to attract people of many faiths and nationalities with whom she shared her spirit of prayer, simplicity, sacrifice, and her apostolate of humble works of love.

Because of Mother Teresa’s profound commitment to giving her life to God, the Catholic Church, and poor people throughout the world, she captured the Indian Padmashri Award in 1962 and the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. She received both prizes and attention “for the glory of God and in the name of the poor.”

In less than two years following Mother Teresa’s death, Pope John Paul II permitted the opening of her Cause of Canonization on December 20, 2002 and approved the decrees of her heroic virtues and the miracle of the healing of a non-Christian woman in India who had a huge abdominal tumor. Mother Teresa’s members of the Missionaries of Charity prayed for their founder’s intervention to help the sick woman. The following day, the huge abdominal tumor could not be found in the Indian woman’s abdomen by physicians in India.

On October 19, 2003, Pope John Paul II beatified Mother Teresa of Calcutta. The beatification ceremony is the first step in naming Mother Teresa an official saint of the Catholic Church. The recognition of one more miracle will be required for Mother Teresa to become one of the blessed saints of the Catholic Church.

Archbishop D’Souza described Mother Teresa as: “It was Teresa’s single-mindedness, her simplicity and consistency that captured the world’s imagination. One can only recall the beatitude of Jesus, “How happy are the pure of heart.” That pureness of heart is

a simple, single-minded commitment to the ways of God. We computer-dependent citizens of the 20th-century long for simplicity; Mother Teresa of Calcutta lived it.”

During the blessed Mother Teresa’s life, she produced some profound writings that were extremely thought provoking and meaningful. One of the writings she produced that I considered very intriguing is as follows:

Do It Anyway

People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered;
Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, People may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;
Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies;
Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;
Be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight;
Build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous;
Be happy anyway.

The good you do today people will often forget tomorrow;
Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;
Give the world the best you’ve got anyway.

You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God;
It was never between you and them anyway.

—By Mother Teresa

May everyone in the CNMI remember the ways and values of Mother Teresa while you enjoy the holiday season. Merry Christmas and New Year to the entire island community.

Dr. Jesus Camacho
Delano, California

Saipan Tribune

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BOE OKs Inos pay hike

By **LIBERTY DONES**
REPORTER

The Board of Education has unanimously approved to increase education commissioner Rita H. Inos’ annual pay from \$70,000 to \$80,000 effective today.

Board members said Inos’ pay increase is long overdue.

“It should have been done long time ago but it kept being postponed due to funding availability,” said BOE chairman Herman T. Guerrero.

Member Marja Lee Taitano, who moved to have the increase take effect Dec. 14 rather than Dec. 28, said Inos deserves an even bigger payhike.

“She has bigger responsibilities than Northern Marianas College president Kenneth Wright and yet he gets a higher pay,” Taitano said. Wright was hired in August 2002 for \$90,000. Both have doctorate degrees.

“PSS is the biggest government agency. We have certainly more students than NMC,” said Guerrero.

Inos is now on her fifth year as education commissioner. She was first hired for a four-year term in 1998 and was retained by the current board in May 2002 for another four years.

Her rehiring came a few months following her failed election bid for a Lt. Governor position in the 2001 elections.

Inos is seen as “very hardworking and a competent person to handle PSS.”

Inos, who took a leave of absence for about five months this year for medical purposes, returned to PSS in September.

Speak Mandarin program at NMC

Northern Marianas College will be offering courses in the Second Language Certificate program, conversational Mandarin Chinese course and Creative Writing course in Spring 2004.

Second Language Certificate program

- LN 220 Introduction to Linguistics on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5pm to 6:25pm
- LN 240 TFL/TSL Theory and Methodology on Saturdays from 1pm to 4pm.

Conversational Mandarin Chinese course

- CN 100 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7pm to 8:25pm.

Creative Writing course

- EN 201 on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:30pm to 7:55pm.

E-Card to be issued to Filipino workers

The Philippine Consulate General announced Saturday that a delegation from Manila—composed of Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, and Equitable officials—will be on Saipan from Dec. 17 to 18, 2003.

The team will conduct an information campaign about the various programs of the Philippine government for overseas Filipino workers in the Northern Marianas. These programs include OWWA’s Voluntary Membership Program and the Electronic Identification card, or E-Card.

The E-Card serves as permanent identification for overseas Filipino workers who have undergone processing at the

POEA, as well as those who are active OWWA members. The E-Card can also serve as an Overseas Employment Certificate; it can help facilitate claims for OWWA benefits; and it may also be used as an international ATM card.

An active OWWA member who wishes to be issued an E-Card must fill up an application form

and submit a 2x2 colored photo. The E-Card will be issued free of charge. Those who are not yet members of OWWA are urged to apply for membership, while those who have inactive accounts are also urged to file for a renewal.

The Manila delegation will be at the Philippine Consulate General’s Filipino Workers Resource Center on

the ground floor of the Nauru Building in Susupe on Dec. 2003 from 8am onwards.

The Philippine Consulate General is inviting all Filipino workers on Saipan to the FWRC to avail of this opportunity. For additional information, call the Philippine Overseas Labor Office at 235-3411, or the OWWA-Saipan office at 235-6992.

microl
oh yeah
+red

Business

dynasty

virtue
+orange



Nation

Investigators trace diseased cow to Canada

By EMILY GERSEMA
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—Investigators tentatively traced the first U.S. cow with mad cow disease to Canada, which could help determine the scope of the outbreak and might even limit the economic damage to the American beef industry.

In addition, some calves in a quar-

antined herd of 400 that included a male offspring of the sick cow likely will be killed, the Agriculture Department said Saturday. The herd was at a farm in Sunnyside, Wash., which officials refused to name.

Dr. Ron DeHaven, the Agriculture Department's chief veterinarian, said on Saturday that Canadian officials provided records indicating the sick Holstein was in a herd of 74 cattle shipped from

Alberta, Canada, into this country in August 2001 at Eastport, Idaho.

"These animals were all dairy cattle and entered the U.S. only about two or two-and-a-half years ago, so most of them are still likely alive," DeHaven said.

The sick cow's presence in that herd does not mean all 74 animals are infected, DeHaven said. Investigators will probably find where the other 73 animals are within a matter of days, he said.

Finding them will help investigators determine if any other animals are sick and need to be tested.

In May, Canada found a lone cow with the disease in Alberta but has not been able to determine the source of infection.

If U.S. and Canadian officials confirm that the sick cow in Washington state came from Canada, it might save the export market for the American beef industry because the United States could keep its

disease-free status and continue trade.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association in Denver said the indication that the infected cow was from Canada means U.S. trading partners should reopen their borders to American beef. The farm organization said a beef export monitoring program would allow importers to separate beef of Canadian origin if they feel additional precautions are needed.



Cows eat at the dairy farm Sunnry Dene Ranch Saturday, Dec. 27, 2003, in Mabton, Wash. The farm has been quarantined by the state because a cow that came from the farm has been infected with mad cow disease.

ptc

townhouse carpets
+green

2 more victims found in Calif. mudslides

By GILLIAN FLACCUS
AP WRITER

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. (AP)—Search and rescue teams Saturday found the bodies of two more people caught by a mudslide that smothered a mountain church camp in a canyon burned bare by fall wildfires in the San Bernardino Mountains.

Seven bodies have been recovered, and seven people remain missing, from a Christmas Day mudslide that ran through St. Sophia Camp. Another mudslide Thursday killed two people at another campground about five miles away.

It wasn't immediately known whether the bodies recovered Saturday, found near the Greek Orthodox camp's chapel, were those of children or adults. Four of the other five bodies were of children, and several children were among those still unaccounted for.

Officials called off the search Saturday night and will resume Sunday morning.

"We'll continue searching," San Bernardino County sheriff's spokeswoman Cindy Beavers said. "It's very difficult for someone to survive in these conditions and in these temperatures overnight."

Rescue crews poked through acres of mud and debris and used a helicopter to fly over the Santa Ana River because pressure from the torrents of mud could have pushed victims miles downstream.

Beavers said more rain was expected Sunday night and urged people living near the mountains to be vigilant.

"We ask people don't wait, don't put your life in jeopardy," she said. "We don't want to have another situation like the one we have here now."



A rescue worker, top right, finds the body of a victim, not visible, in the mud, Saturday, Dec. 27, 2003, after devastating mudslides swept through the Waterman Canyon area of the San Bernardino, Calif., mountains on Thursday.

Twenty-seven people, many of them Guatemalan immigrants, were celebrating Christmas with the caretaker at the church camp when the mudslide roared through, burying buildings under several feet of debris-filled mud and sweeping away two cabins. Fourteen people were rescued.

The camp, about 60 miles east of Los Angeles, was strewn with boulders and uprooted trees that had been swept down Waterman Canyon after a downpour. Fall wildfires in the area destroyed vegetation that

would have helped stabilize the ground.

The camp caretaker was Jorge Monzon, a Guatemalan immigrant who had become co-pastor of the Church of God Prophecy in Van Nuys, said the Rev. Miguel Garcia, his fellow co-pastor. The missing included Monzon, his wife, Carla, and his 6-month-old son.

The bodies of the Monzons' daughters Wendy, 17, and Raquel, 9, were found near the camp, said the Rev. Emilio Ruedas of the Church of God Prophecy in San Bernardino,

which the Monzons attended.

The coroner's office on Saturday identified the bodies of the girls and those of two other people who died at the camp: 11-year-old Jose Pablo Navarro and Ramon Meza, 29, both of San Bernardino. A 12- to 14-year-old boy had not been identified Saturday afternoon.

A bilingual memorial service was scheduled for Sunday afternoon at the San Bernardino church.

Many of those who had been visiting Jorge Monzon at the camp were Guatemalan immigrants and

California mudslide survivors recall terror

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. (AP)—The creek at the Devore KOA campground started creeping over its banks early Christmas morning, the water from the heavy rainstorm colored black by ashy runoff from hillsides devastated by fall wildfires.

Joe and Patsy Plante tried all day to ignore it as the water inched toward their 26-foot trailer home at the campground in the foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains.

Then, just before 6 p.m., a levee above the campsite broke.

Plante looked out his window in time to see the trailer behind his shift in a torrent of rushing water and head straight toward him. He opened the door, then thought better of it as 4-foot-wide boulders, uprooted trees and waves of mud rolled past with a deafening roar.

"When I opened that door I thought we were dead," Plante said. "I saw all the trailers getting pushed along by the mud and water. You could hear the crunch of the metal when they hit each other."

"Mud was the biggest part

of the problem," said Bill Brothers, a volunteer with the Rim of the World Search and Rescue Team. "It would look solid, but if you stepped on it, it was like lentil soup—it was so unstable. Everything was changing and shifting. You really had to watch yourself."

His team helped rescue one man stuck in mud up to his chest at the Greek Orthodox Saint Sophia Camp.

After using chain saws to remove two large trees pinning the man, the rescuers discovered he was still pinned by a boulder wedged against his right heel. His body temperature dropped dangerously and he became incoherent.

"It was such a race with time to get him out," Brothers said.

The man was eventually freed, but in the darkness the team had to call off a planned search of the other side of the stream.

"It's very difficult to call off the search because we've been on searches that have been called off where you think people couldn't survive and then they do," Brothers said. "It was really frustrating."

nearly all the missing children were Sunday school students at the church, Ruedas said.

Church members gathered Saturday in small groups in the parking lot. Some held their heads in their hands while others read newspaper accounts of the mudslides. They refused requests for interviews.

Ruedas said that when rescuers find a body they take a picture and show it to him for initial identification. He then contacts the families.

"It's devastating, but we face many difficult problems in life, and we're dealing with this," he said. "We are very united. This is the whole church's loss."

Search resumes for 3 Utah snowboarders

PROVO, Utah (AP)—Rescue dogs joined emergency teams Saturday in the search for three snowboarders feared dead in an avalanche in the backcountry of northern Utah. Meanwhile, a helicopter crew dropped explosives in Provo Canyon in the morning to break up potential snow slides so search teams could safely get into the area.

Rod Newberry, 20, Adam Merz, 18, and Mike Hebert, 19, had been snowboarding with two friends when the avalanche swept down the canyon Friday afternoon. Their friends survived, but Newberry, Merz and Hebert were gone.

With the threat of another avalanche strong, the search for the three was called off Friday night. Loose snow was still trickling downhill, and masses of snow clung to slopes above the search area. Explosive charges

were dropped Saturday morning to trigger controlled avalanches to ease the danger.

"We've been informed that it's more of a recovery effort at this point, but we're still holding out hope that by some miracle we'll find one of them alive," Utah County Sheriff's spokesman Sgt. Dennis Harris said Saturday morning.

Dogs sniffed out areas with the possible scent of the men, then poles up to 20 feet long marked the spot as people began to dig through the snowpack, which had a consistency compared to wet cement.

One of the survivors, Matt Long, was led back up the mountainside late Saturday afternoon to assist in the search.

None of the snowboarders carried standard avalanche safety equipment such as radio transmitters, shovels or probe poles, Tracy said.

Transgendered community remembers murder

By TARA GODVIN
AP WRITER

FALLS CITY, Neb. (AP)—Ten years ago, a handsome, brown-haired 21-year-old named Brandon Teena was raped and later murdered by two men after they discovered he wasn't born a man.

The New Year's Eve tragedy in rural southeastern Nebraska inspired the award-winning 1999 film, "Boys Don't Cry." It also touched off a movement in the transgendered community.

In the days after Teena was killed, a new generation of activists banded together to demand greater civil rights protections. Ten years later, 65 municipalities and states have hate crime laws that specifically include transgendered people, according to the Transgender Law Policy Institute. California became the fourth state to adopt

such a law earlier this year.

Big corporations, such as Hewlett-Packard and Nike, have adopted similar rules. And 145 members of Congress have banned such discrimination from their offices, said Riki Wilchins, executive director of the Washington-based Gender Public Advocacy Coalition.

"How many times do you get to see a giant sea change like this in people's perceptions? But you look at Congress, corporate America, and cities and states ... and you see this enormous change in how people are looking at gender as a civil rights issue," Wilchins said.

Nebraska passed a hate-crime law in 1997, but it did not refer specifically to transgendered people. It was found unconstitutional after a 2000 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in another case involving sentencing provisions.

One problem for the transgendered community—

which encompasses a range of identities including cross-dressers and transsexuals—is that allies have been hard to come by.

Although they were at the forefront of New York City's 1969 Stonewall Riots, which led to the gay rights movement, the relationship between the transgendered and gay communities hasn't always been easy.

"For a long time, the gay movement was like, 'Well, that's an interesting problem, but it's not our problem. You folks are too weird. We don't want to talk to you,'" said Paisley Currah, executive director of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies at Brooklyn College in New York.

Teena's story helped reveal the two groups' common ground, Currah said.

The national attention given to Teena's murder also helped intro-

duce the idea of being transgendered to mainstream America, said Shannon Minter, a board member of the Transgender Law and Policy Institute in New York.

"People are just much less freaked out about the concept, and see us more as human beings with partners, families, children," said Minter, who is transgendered.

Many activists say Teena's murder attracted so much attention because of its brutality and the failure of law enforcement to protect Teena.

John Lotter and Marvin Nissen were convicted of murdering Teena, who had dated a female friend of the two men. They also killed Lisa Lambert, 24, and Philip DeVine, 22, who had witnessed Teena's death in a farmhouse.



Teena

Asia

China seals well after gas leak kills 198

By AUDRA ANG
AP WRITER

DUNHAO, China (AP)—Sitting in their temporary shelter in a government office, Xiong Qimei hugged her two sons and waited anxiously Saturday for word that they could return to their village after crews sealed a gas well in China’s southwest that spewed toxic fumes and killed at least 198 people.

Xiong’s family was among 41,000 people forced to flee their homes by the disaster that left villages strewn with the bodies of adults and children.

“I’m lucky I wasn’t injured,” said Xiong, 33, whose family shares a crowded family planning center with hundreds of evacuees. “But I miss my home. I feel like I’ve lost everything.”

Hundreds of police and soldiers continued searching the area Saturday for survivors and more bodies, the government said.

Scientists, meanwhile, were measuring toxins in water and on plants after crews plugged the well in a remote, mountainous area with tons of sealant, the government said. But it said people who lived within three miles of

the gas field in the town of Gaoqiao, northeast of the major city of Chongqing, weren’t allowed to return yet.

Emergency crews spent two hours pouring sealant down the well but didn’t give any other details of the operation Saturday, the government said. Earlier reports said technicians were using earth-moving vehicles. Newspaper photos showed them wearing respirators and silvery, head-to-toe protective suits.

While officials have said that light rains forecast over the next three days should help clear away the poison, the official Xinhua News Agency, citing unidentified experts, warned it could also make ground pollution worse.

There didn’t appear to be any danger of a new blowout, Xinhua said, citing an industry expert.

Meanwhile, China’s Cabinet appointed a team of investigators led by the chief of the national industrial safety agency to find the cause and who was responsible.

Earlier reports said a drilling mishap broke open the well at the Chuangdongbei gas field.

The disaster was huge even

by the standards of Chinese industry, which suffers thousands of deaths a year in coal mine explosions and other accidents.

“It was an accident of rare severity,” Xinhua quoted a spokesman for the safety agency, Huang Yi, as saying. “We must learn a lesson from it.”

According to government figures, China’s gas drilling industry is comparatively safe. Two gas blowouts since 1992 have killed a total of 17 people.

Xinhua reported Saturday that one member of the paramilitary People’s Armed Police, Lt. Liao Yiquan, discovered the bodies of his uncle, aunt and niece. Later, Liao came across his father, who was blinded by the gas. His mother was still missing.

In Dunhao, northwest of Gaoqiao, evacuees at the family planning center sat outdoors around coal-fueled fires. Dogs and chickens wandered the grounds, dodging trucks arriving with blankets and food.

One room was a sea of straw and mattresses, where families gathered to sleep or keep warm under donated quilts.

Chinese describe escape from toxic gas

CHONGQING, China (AP)—Villagers were preparing for sleep when the gas well burst with a bang. Then came choking fumes. Families dashed out of their homes in terror, struggling to breathe in the earing cloud.

Survivors and state media gave harrowing accounts Friday of the disaster that killed at least 198 people in China’s southwest, forced 41,000 to flee and left a 10-square-mile “death zone” strewn with bodies lying in fields, by the sides of roads and in homes.

“I heard a roaring sound like huge flames and I smelled something burning,” said Xiao Ninghu, a 33-year-old farmer reached by telephone at the school where he and other evacuees were staying. “I was in a panic. I was so frightened.”

The blowout—caused when a drilling accident broke open a gas well Tuesday night, according to Xinhua—poured out a toxic mix of natural gas and hydrogen sulfide, the government said.

The poisonous gas turned an

mic Times reported. Tang was quoted as saying she had just put her children to bed when she smelled the foul gas and heard neighbors shouting that the well had exploded. Tang dressed her two daughters and ran outside with them, choking on the fumes, the newspaper said. She fainted on the road but woke after five minutes and struggled on to a neighbor’s house.

Tang’s 5-year-old daughter complained that she felt ill and “by the time they reached safety, the girl had stopped breathing,” the newspaper said. It didn’t say what happened to the other girl.

A merchant in Xiaoyang was credited with saving 400 people, piling residents into his truck and carrying them away from the gas in 20 trips, the newspaper said.

Xiao, the farmer, said all eight members of his family escaped from the village of Nongya. As they left, pigs and chickens lay dead in their farmhouse yard, he said.

townhouse
patio
+green



Firefighters check the accident gas well in Kaixian, southwest China's Chongqing Municipality Saturday Dec. 27, 2003.

N. Korea willing to resume nuclear talks



DISINFECTANT BATH

A health worker sprays disinfectant at geese at the Seoul Grand Park, South Korea, Tuesday. South Korean authorities have marked nearly one million chickens and ducks for slaughter to help contain a highly contagious bird flu spreading throughout the country.

AP

Bomber identified in Pakistan assassination try

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—Officials say at least one of three suicide assailants who tried to bomb the Pakistani president's motorcade appears to have been a foreigner, raising suspicions that the attack that killed 15 people had links to international terrorism.

The attack on Thursday—the second attempt on President Pervez Musharraf's life in less than two weeks—wounded 46, including several police officers in the president's motorcade.

Investigators sifting through the wreckage found part of an attacker's face, and the features appeared to be those of a foreigner, Information Min-

ister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said.

"It appears that he is not a Pakistani," Ahmed said without elaborating.

Musharraf, 60, was unhurt in the attack, which occurred just a few hundred yards from the site of the previous bombing Dec. 14 in Rawalpindi, a bustling city near the capital, Islamabad. The attack came little more than a week before seven South Asian leaders were to hold a summit meeting in Islamabad.

Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali said the Jan. 4-6 summit would go ahead as planned. Officials from Nepal and Sri Lanka confirmed their leaders still intended to be there.

Initially, officials said there were

only two attackers who tried to ram the president's motorcade in two pickup trucks, each loaded with 45-65 pounds of explosives. They got close enough to crack the windshield on Musharraf's limousine.

"The bodies of three suicide attackers have been found," Faisal Saleh Hayyat, the interior minister, told the Senate on Friday.

One of the wounded in the attack died on Friday, bringing the death toll to 15, including the three suicide bombers, Interior Ministry spokesman Abdur Rauf Chaudhry said.

Deadly Afghan gunbattle draws in GIs

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—Suspected al-Qaida fighters ambushed Afghan security forces near the Pakistani border Saturday, and U.S. forces were drawn into the deadly gunbattle that ensued, a local commander said.

A senior Afghan intelligence official and six attackers were killed at the scene in eastern Khost province, said Khial Baz, a military commander in Khost.

The Afghan officials were traveling in a pickup truck when they came under fire. The province's deputy intelligence chief was killed instantly and his boss, Qudratullah Madezai, was seriously hurt, Baz said by satellite telephone.

The rest of the passengers opened

fire along with U.S. reinforcements killing six attackers.

The assailants appear to have been Arabs fighting for al-Qaida. Documents found on the bodies were in Arabic, Baz said.

The top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Lt. Gen. David W. Barno, said this month that hundreds of al-Qaida fighters still appear to be active in Khost and neighboring provinces on the long Afghanistan-Pakistan border. The area has seen a wave of attacks this year by insurgents believed to be a mix of Taliban, al-Qaida and fighters loyal to renegade Afghan warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

The attacks came as debate over Afghanistan's new constitution soured Saturday.

Government allies accused religious hard-liners of trying to pepper the charter with strict Islamic laws and sides disagreed over how much power should be given to the future presidency.

President Hamid Karzai and U.S. officials are hoping the talks among the 502 delegates to the loya jirga, or grand council, will end with a draft awarding sweeping powers to the country's chief executive in a tolerant Islamic state.

But they face deepening opposition from powerful leaders of armed factions who fought the Soviet occupation in the 1980s under the banner of Islam and still hold sway in the provinces.

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea confirmed Saturday that it is willing to hold talks with the United States and five other nations early next year on ending its nuclear weapons program.

China's top diplomat on the Korean nuclear issue, Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi, met North Korean leaders in Pyongyang during a three-day trip that ended Saturday, an unidentified North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman was quoted as saying by the North's official news agency, KCNA.

KCNA said both sides agreed to set up a second round of the six-nation negotiations.

"Both sides... expressed their willingness to make appropriate preparations so that talks can resume at an early date next year to continue the process for a peaceful solution to the nuclear issue," KCNA quoted the North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying.

KCNA was monitored by South Korea's national Yonhap news agency.

China's official Xinhua News Agency carried a similar report on Friday.

The United States, China, Japan, Russia and the two Koreas held a first round of talks on North Korea's nuclear development in Beijing in August. The meetings ended without much progress or an agreement on a date for new talks.

The North Korean spokesman was quoted as reiterating the North's demands that the nuclear dispute be resolved through a "package deal based on simultaneous actions."

"The main problem in preparing for the next round of six-nation talks is the United States' refusal to make a shift in its policy and its insistence that we disarm ourselves by abandoning our nuclear program first," KCNA said. "If the United States sticks to this position, it will break the foundation of dialogue."

North Korea says it will dismantle its nuclear programs in exchange for a U.S. security guarantee and aid. But before making any concessions, Washington wants North Korea to give up its nuclear ambitions.

Senior foreign ministry officials from South Korea, China and Japan planned to meet in Seoul on Sunday to discuss the nuclear crisis.

ASIAN Briefs

Tank rams minibus in Indonesia, 18 killed

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—An Indonesian army tank accidentally ran over a public minibus on Java island on Saturday, killing 18 people and injuring at least five, authorities said.

The tank was returning from military exercises along a narrow, winding road near the town of Magelang when the driver lost control, rammed the minibus and rolled over it, said police Lt. Heru Widodo.

"The tank was going from side to side," Aditya, who goes by a single name, told the el-Shinta radio station.

Two of the 18 people killed were soldiers in the tank. The rest were passengers on the bus, said Widodo.

Fire in Chinese coal mine kills 26

BEIJING (AP)—A fire raced through coal mine in northern China, killing 26 miners, the official Xinhua News Agency reported Saturday.

It was a new blow to China's accident-plagued industrial complex, days after a massive gas leak killed 191 people in China's southwest. Thousands of people are killed every year in coal mine explosions and other disasters.

The fire broke out at about 8 a.m. on Friday in the mine in Wu'an, a city in Hebei province, Xinhua said. Investigators found that cables in mine caught fire, igniting a larger blaze, Xinhua said. Thirty-six miners were in the mine, but 10 escaped, the report said. It said rescue workers found 26 bodies.

UN staff among victims of Benin crash

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)—At least 15 United Nations peacekeepers from Bangladesh were believed to be among the dead from a plane crash in Benin two days ago, the military said Saturday.

The peacekeepers from the Bangladeshi army were on their way home for a holiday, the army said in a news release in the capital, Dhaka. Thirteen of the peace-keepers were based in Sierra Leone and two in Liberia.

The Boeing 727 jet crashed on Christmas Day as it took off from Benin's capital with 161 people on board. At least 128 people were killed in the crash, about 20 survived, and many more were missing.

The Bangladeshi peacekeepers, mostly army officers, had boarded the plane during a stopover in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The plane was on its way to Beirut, Lebanon.

The aircraft clipped a building at the end of the runway and plunged into the Atlantic Ocean, scattering bodies and debris along the beach and into the sea.

RP exec, his daughter, die in grenade blast

COTABATO, Philippines (AP)—An unidentified assailant tossed a hand grenade into the home of an education official in the southern Philippines on Saturday, killing him and his 14-year-old daughter and slightly wounding his two other children, police said.

The Department of Education auditor for Magindanao province, Maximo Pamlian, 54, was watching TV with his children when the explosion rocked his home in Cotabato city, said police officer Edward Torres.

Police suspected the motive for the attack was a personal grudge.

"The father dropped and covered the explosive with his body, so he saved his other children," Torres said. Pamlian and his daughter Janie, 14, died on the spot. The other two children, aged 18 and 22, suffered leg and hand wounds.

No one has claimed responsibility, police said, adding that neighbors didn't hear the blast because of firecracker explosions in the area.

World

Attacks by Iraq rebels kill 13, wound 172



RISING CRASH TOLL
Locals make use of a seat, left, salvaged from the wreckage of the crashed plane to watch the salvage and rescue efforts in Cotonou, Benin, Saturday Dec. 27, 2003. Eight more bodies of passengers washed ashore throughout the night bringing the death toll of the Christmas day crash to at least 148.

Milosevic likely to win Parliamentary seat

By **GEORGE JAHN**
AP WRITER

BELGRADE, Serbia-Montenegro (AP)—It looks like another rough day for Serbian politics Sunday—four indicted war criminals are running for parliament.

The elections could result in seats for at least two of them, Slobodan Milosevic and a former associate. They won't be taking those seats, since both are in jail in The Hague, awaiting trial. But their election will deal a prestige blow to U.S. and European hopes of fostering a pro-Western democratic leadership.

Three years after Milosevic was overthrown and a decade of Balkan wars neared their end, Serbians have become disillusioned with democracy. That's evident from their failure, three times in a row, to get a big enough turnout to elect a president.

Sunday's election is likely

to be just as inconclusive. Polls are predicting the Radical Party will win the most seats in the 250-member parliament, but not enough to form a majority coalition.

The Radical Party's lead candidate is Vojislav Seselj, a former Milosevic associate. Before he was jailed pending trial for alleged war crimes during the Balkan wars, his claims to fame included spitting at the parliament speaker and brandishing a handgun in front of the parliament building.

The Radicals are projected to win 24 percent of the vote, and the Socialists, who are running Milosevic, 8 percent. The closest pro-democracy grouping is G-17 at 21 percent.

The poll published Monday of 1,500 people by the Strategic Marketing agency did not have a margin of error.

Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Zivkovic of the pro-democracy bloc expects many will

vote for the extremists to show their disaffection with the West and three years of market reforms that have left them little better off than under Milosevic.

"Even Hitler came to power through democratic elections," Zivkovic told The Associated Press, equating the wave of anti-Western feeling with Germany's sense of betrayal after World War I.

Although average monthly salaries have tripled to the equivalent of about \$300 since Milosevic fell, prices of some basics like household electricity have increased tenfold. Industrial production has dropped by 3 percent this year, and privatization of state-owned companies has helped to drive up unemployment to about 30 percent.

Fractures in the pro-democracy bloc that took over after Milosevic's fall and allegations of widespread corruption have left Serbs hugely disappointed.

Top EU official escapes letter bomb

ROME (AP)—European Union Commission President Romano Prodi opened a letter bomb at his home in Bologna on Saturday but was not hurt when the package, containing a book packed with explosive powder, burst into flames.

Prodi emerged from his home late Saturday to assure the public he was fine.

Last week, two small bombs exploded near Prodi's home, also without harming anyone. A previously unknown anarchist group claimed responsibility for those attacks, saying it had targeted Prodi as a representative of a repressive

"new European order."

He said the pages of the book in the packet had been cut to insert explosive powder. Prodi noted that, due to the recent threats against him, he had exercised great caution in opening the package.

The book was a copy of the novel "The Pleasure" by the writer Gabriele D'Annunzio, a famous early supporter of Fascism before his death in 1938. Prodi joked that the choice of book might have been ironic.

Prodi said the package had been addressed to his wife, and

contained a non-existent return address in Bologna.

Prodi lives in Brussels, Belgium, where the EU executive body is based, but he has been spending the Christmas holidays in his hometown in Italy.

On Dec. 21, two small bombs hidden in trash bins exploded near Prodi's Bologna home. Those devices went off when the house was empty, and nobody was injured. Those bombs consisted of a cooking pot, a gas cylinder and a timer, and were placed in trash bins a few feet from Prodi's house.

By **SAMEER N. YACOB**
AP WRITER

KARBALA, Iraq (AP)—In the biggest rebel attack since Saddam Hussein's capture, suicide bombers and assailants with mortars and grenade launchers blasted coalition military bases and the governor's office in this southern city Saturday, killing 13 people and wounding at least 172.

The death toll in Karbala included six coalition soldiers—four Bulgarians and two Thais; six Iraqi police officers; and a civilian.

At least 172 people, many of them civilians caught in the chaos, were wounded in three nearly simultaneous assaults apparently designed to test the resolve of Washington's allies in the coalition governing Iraq. A Polish-led force is responsible for security around the holy Shiite city of Karbala.

Also Saturday, Iraq's U.S.-led administration put bounties of \$1 million each on the heads of 12 remaining fugitives from the coalition's list of the 55 most-wanted Iraqis.

Administrators already are offering \$10 million for information leading to the capture or death of the 13th remaining fugitive—Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, a senior official in the former regime and a Saddam Hussein confidant who now is the most wanted man in Iraq.

Insurgents also may have targeted this city 70 miles south of Baghdad on the assumption that military targets there would be more vulnerable to attack. The most intense rebel activity is in Sunni areas west and north of Baghdad, where combat-tested American troops have more experience fending off suicide bombers and other assailants.

One of four suicide bombers in Karbala gained entry to a Bulgarian camp, cutting through roadblocks in a car and destroying a building where the headquarters of the unit was located, Bulgarian Deputy Defense Minister Ilko Dimitrov said in Sofia.

Four Bulgarian soldiers were killed and 27 others were wounded, Dimitrov said.

Bulgaria, a staunch supporter of the U.S. military campaign in Iraq, has a 485-member light infantry battalion stationed under

Polish command.

A car bomb also killed two Thai soldiers on guard duty when the vehicle rammed into the walls of their camp, a Thai spokesman said in Bangkok. Thailand sent 422 soldiers to Iraq in September to provide medical aid and help rebuild war-shattered infrastructure.

The Thais were confident enough about their security that they planned to send 200 Thai civilians to visit their troops. A Thai newspaper, The Nation, said the tourists would travel with senior military officials in February. In the wake of the attacks, it was unclear whether the plan would go ahead.

President Bush called the prime ministers of Bulgaria and Thailand to express his condolences for the soldiers killed in Saturday's attacks, White House spokesman Jimmy Orr. He did not have further details of the calls.

Bush placed the calls from his ranch in Crawford, Texas.

townhouse
sofa
+green

Iran fears quake toll could hit 40,000

By ALI AKBAR DAREINI
AP WRITER

BAM, Iran (AP)—Relatives and rescuers used everything from bare hands to bulldozers

Saturday to retrieve victims of a powerful earthquake that crumbled vast swaths of this city of mud-brick buildings into powder and frost-chilled rubble, killing thousands of people.

The destruction was so all-encompassing that a reliable death toll in the city of 80,000 was still unavailable. Most people were asleep when the earthquake, which the U.S. Geological Survey measured at magnitude 6.6, struck at 5:28 a.m. Friday. The Interior Ministry estimated the death toll at 20,000 but officials in the region said it could be double that amount.

"An unbelievable human disaster has occurred," said Akbar Alavi, the governor of Kerman, the provincial capital. "As more bodies are pulled out, we fear that the death toll may reach as high as 40,000."

But other officials said later Saturday the number of dead would be lower.

"The figures are not correct; no precise statistics on the number of casualties are available yet but it seems that number of the victims is less," Deputy Governor Mohammad Farshad told the official Islamic Republic News Agency.

The Interior Ministry estimated the number of injured at 30,000.

One American was killed and another injured as they visited the city's 2,000-year-old citadel, a U.S. State Department official said in Washington. The injured American was hospitalized in Tehran, State Department spokesman Lou Fintor said. The victims' names were not released.

Bam, in southeast Iran about 630 miles

Countries mobilize quake aid for Iran

PARIS (AP)—In a show of global unity, governments around the world rushed medical experts, rescue teams, water-purification systems—even tea—to the earthquake-ravaged Iranian city of Bam on Saturday.

As they scrambled to dole out millions of dollars in aid, foreign donors said they could not help but feel their efforts were insufficient in the face of so much death and devastation.

As one French diplomatic official put it: "Is what you do ever enough in a catastrophe of this scale?"

Dozens of international relief flights and aid deployments were under way. Responding to Iran's calls for help, nations rich and poor offered tents, blankets, tarpaulins, cooking sets and water purification tablets to residents who lost their homes.

Setting aside politics, the Bush administration said Saturday it would send 150,000 pounds of medical supplies and about 200 search and rescue and medical experts. The airlift was to include blood, food and other rations delivered in at least a half-dozen cargo planes.

The United States has not had diplo-

matic relations with Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution and last year Bush said Iran was part of an "axis of evil," along with pre-war Iraq and North Korea.

The quake reduced many of the city's mud-brick buildings to rubble and heavily damaged others, leaving thousands of people out on the streets in near freezing weather. A lack of potable water was a major concern.

Dean Owen, spokesman for Seattle-based aid group World Vision, said it was critical to get aid to Iran quickly, especially water purification tablets to avert a potential outbreak of cholera.

At the national level Iran welcomed the contributions, although one regional official rejected any assistance from Israel, a longtime nemesis of the Islamic state.

The European Union said it provided \$2.85 million in emergency assistance for Iran. Ireland, Norway and Australia pledged more than \$1 million.

France was dispatching two military planes carrying about 60 medical experts and some 20 tons of equipment needed to construct a field hospital.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societ-

ies issued a preliminary appeal for \$12.3 million to bring relief assistance. The federation said it would deliver 20,000 family tents, 200,000 blankets, and 400,000 water purification tablets, among other items like electricity generators and kerosene heaters.

Teams from Britain, the Czech Republic, Germany, Russia, Switzerland and Turkey were among the first international rescuers to arrive in Iran, and some described the scene as apocalyptic.

Roland Schlachter, the leader of a 10-person Swiss team that arrived in Bam early Saturday, said the chances of turning up survivors are slim.

Others were more optimistic. Recovery experts from Britain's Rapid-UK were to scour rubble from two hospitals and large apartment blocks that were flattened. The British crews used snake-eye cameras, listening devices and carbon dioxide detectors in their search for survivors.

Turkey, which has suffered deadly earthquakes itself, sent six trucks and five cargo planes carrying 105 rescuers, medicine, food and rescue vehicles into neighboring Iran.

from Tehran, suffered such extreme damage because most of the buildings are made of unreinforced mud brick and the quake was centered only about 10 miles outside the city, said Harley Benz, a USGS seismologist.

"The communities in this part of Iran are really not resilient to earthquakes," said Benz, head of the National Earthquake Information Center in Golden, Colo. "It's very sad and unfortunate."

Aftershocks registered as high as 5.3, according to the geophysics institute of Tehran University.

Searchers carried the injured in their arms, on stretchers and in the backs of trucks, seeking help outside Bam's ruined hospitals or at the airport while awaiting evacuation to Kerman, the provincial capital about 120 miles away, or other cities.

A provincial government official, Saeed Iranmanesh, told The Associated Press that 3,000 bodies have been recovered and buried, and more than 9,000 of the injured were sent to hospitals throughout the country.

About 150 people, including an infant, were pulled alive from the rubble, Revolutionary Guards officer Masoud Amiri said. The baby was buried more than 24 hours but was listed in stable

condition at a hospital, he said.

By late afternoon, a 1 1/2-mile line of vehicles waited to enter Bam as Iranians rushed to find relatives or to bring emergency supplies.

Iran opened its airspace to all planes carrying emergency supplies and waived visa requirements for foreign relief personnel.

"The disaster is far too huge for us to meet all of our needs," President Mohammad Khatami said as he declared three days of mourning.

The leader of an Iranian relief team, Ahmad Najafi, said he also feared the toll could reach 40,000. On one street alone, 200 bodies were extracted from the rubble in a single hour, he said.

In another part of Bam, a gray-bearded man in his 50s, wearing the white turban common to rural villages in this southeastern corner of Iran, watched with resignation as four men dug with their bare hands and a single shovel.

What once was his home was a flattened pile of rubble and dust. He pointed to where the bedrooms should have been, seemingly resigned that none of his three teenage children or his wife would be found alive.

He fainted as he spotted a slender

hand protruding from a red pajama sleeve in the debris.

Behind him, the body of a girl in her teens was excavated and quickly covered with a blanket. Then the bodies of his sons and a woman in her 40s were found.

No one was alive.

Thousands of survivors prepared to spend a second night outdoors, sleeping in tents or under blankets or whatever they could find as temperatures dropped to freezing.

The earthquake collapsed the walls of the local prison, allowing all 800 inmates to escape, guard Vahid Masoumpour said.

The quake destroyed most of Bam's citadel—a medieval fortress that is the city's best-known structure. The tallest section, including a distinctive square tower, crumbled like a sand castle.

The U.N. cultural agency, UNESCO, considered declaring the citadel a protected World Heritage Site.

Some of the citadel's walls were still standing Saturday, but they were damaged.

Iran has a history of devastating earthquakes, including one of magnitude 7.3 that killed about 50,000 people in northwest Iran in 1990.

In a mass grave, an Iranian clergyman prays in front of the bodies, of people who were killed in a massive earthquake that hit the ancient city of Bam about 1000 kilometers (630 miles) southeast of the capital Tehran, Iran, Saturday, Dec. 27, 2003.

AP

Health & Fitness



Cattle are herded together, in this Nov. 27, 2000 file photo, at the Lorenzen Farm in Hoersten, 30 miles (50km) west of Kiel, northern Germany. All of this farm's 160 cows were killed after one of them tested positive for mad cow disease. U.S. federal officials raced on Wednesday, Dec. 24, 2003, to find out where a Washington state cow, apparently infected with mad cow disease, was born and may have been infected. AP

Experts: Consumers need not panic over beef

By **TARA BURGHART**
AP WRITER

Poll: Americans waver on new Medicare Law

The American public initially supports Medicare legislation providing help with prescription drugs, but that support fades when presented with criticism of the bill signed into law this year, a poll released Saturday suggests.

Asked whether they support "a Medicare bill which among other things provides prescription drug coverage and allows private companies to provide some services," almost two-thirds, 63 percent, said yes, according to the poll by the National Annenberg Election Survey.

When those polled were presented with opponents' arguments that the bill won't help seniors that much and cutting costs will eventually destroy Medicare, support faded. After hearings those arguments, only one in five of the total sample, 21 percent, supported it and another two in five said they were unsure.

Opposition to the bill weakened when opponents were given the additional argument that cutting costs is essential for Medicare to survive.

The poll found that almost half in the sample were unsure about the Medicare bill once questions were raised on either side.

During a campaign year, both sides are certain to vigorously debate the measure.

The poll of 1,615 adults was taken from Dec. 8-23 and has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 2 percentage points. (AP)

With the nation experiencing its first case of mad cow disease, the grocery store's meat aisle has become a place where consumers worry about more than the prices.

Several food safety experts offer this advice to consumers worried about contracting the human form of the disease: Don't eat cow brains. And if you are especially concerned, avoid ground beef if you don't know what part of the cow it came from.

But the nutritionists and public health experts also urge consumers not to panic, stressing that only one case in a cow has been discovered and that the human form of the illness is very rare.

"This may be nothing. It may be something," said Marion Nestle, author of the book "Food Safety" and a professor of food nutrition studies at New York University. "The risk is very low. On a statistical basis, it's nothing. But if it's you (who develops the disease), it makes a huge difference."

Mad cow disease is officially known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE. Humans can contract a fatal variant of the disease by eating infected beef products. A total of 153 people worldwide have developed it, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The discovery of mad cow in the United States has some consumers questioning whether they should change their diet:

Q. Should I stop eating all beef?

A. No. In almost two decades of research, scientists have never found the misshapen protein that eats holes in a cow's brain—called a prion—in the muscle

that makes up cuts of meat. Instead, the protein resides in nerve tissue, specifically the brain and spinal cord, along with the lower part of the small intestine, eyes and tonsil, said Dean Cliver, a food safety professor at the University of California at Davis who has served on several government panels examining BSE.

Q. So why is there any concern?

A. Some people consider cow brains a delicacy. Also, the spinal cord and assorted nerve bundles are not always removed from cattle before processing begins at meatpacking plants, said William Hueston, head of the Center for Animal Health and Food Safety at the University of Minnesota. Machines that are designed to strip as much flesh off the bone as possible can accidentally include some of that central nervous system material, Hueston said.

Q. How do I avoid getting beef that could contain infected neural material?

A. Experts say "muscle" cuts like roasts, chops and steaks are fine. The "t" in a T-bone steak comes from the area where the vertebrae in the backbone meet the rib. Sometimes that meeting point still contains a piece of the spinal cord, which consumers should avoid eating, Cliver said.

Q. What should I do about ground beef?

A. If consumers are worried about neural tissue being contained in ground beef, they can buy a labeled cut of meat, such as chuck or round, and have the butcher grind it for them, said both Nestle and Hueston.

But Ruth Kava, director of nutrition at the American Council on Science and Health, said

she sees no reason to avoid ground beef. The risk of contracting the human form of the disease needs to be put into perspective, she said. "It's more important to wash your hands and not kiss someone with the flu," she said.

Q. Should I avoid pro-

cessed meats, like hot dogs, luncheon meats and pizza toppings?

A. You want to look for products made from cow muscle but, as in the case of ground beef, quality varies. "You get what you pay for," Hueston said. Processed products are made from several sources of

meat, and some tests have detected tissue from the central nervous system in samples of beef products. Hueston recommends consumers contact the food company or go to its Web site to find out exactly what raw products go into its processed meats.

Q. Any concerns about

wanted for
employment

Life & Style

One Times Square remains cultural icon

By VERENA DOBNIK
AP WRITER

Only one man holds the key to this room deep under Times Square, where the only sounds are a hissing pipe and a rumbling subway overhead. Behind the blue padlocked door are the pieces of the New Year's ball that will mark midnight as it slides 77 feet down a pole atop One Times Square.

The crystal sphere lands amid the gritty water tanks, rickety planks and iron grates that fill the rooftop of this building—one of the most recognizable in the world. The 25-story tower has hosted New Year celebrations since it opened in 1904, with the famous "ball drop" added in 1907.

For all its exterior glamour, though, One Times Square is a bit like an amusement park funhouse—more glitz than guts.

The building is covered on the outside with billboards, flashing lights and an electronic news zipper, but it is virtually empty inside. Countdown Entertainment, which co-produces the annual Dec. 31 event, is the only tenant on its 21st and 22nd floors.

"This whole building is a promotional event," Countdown president Jeff Strauss said.

One Times Square earns most of its keep as a backbone for billboards, electronic ads and the New Year's ball. It serves as "an icon of advertising and modern culture," says entertainment analyst Louis Brill.

Inside, its labyrinth of staircases, halls and elevators are dotted with dust balls and wrapped in an eerie hush. On a recent afternoon, the New Year's crew was assembling the ball in the basement room.

Strauss has the only key and he's guarding a secret: the new pattern of Waterford crystal triangles for this year's ball. An electrician unwraps 72 triangles from boxes that arrived from Ireland; more than 400 other crystals peek from metal storage trunks. Nearby sits the metal "skeleton" that holds the crystals, the pulsating strobe lights and hundreds of other bulbs.

Days before the big night, the 1,070-pound ball is moved to the roof. Its

NEW YEAR'S EVE TRADITION

Changing stage for the same show

Widening in the new year is a long-held tradition at One Times Square, the epicenter of Times Square in Manhattan. The first celebration was in 1904 and three years later the first ball was lowered. One billion people are expected to watch the event, which is held on the roof of the building.



1904

The 25-story building was built by Cyrus L.W. Kildie and Andrew C. MacKenzie for The New York Times newspaper. The paper moved in on Dec. 31, 1904.



1921

The building's terra-cotta facade was replaced with marble by tenant Allied Chemical Corp.



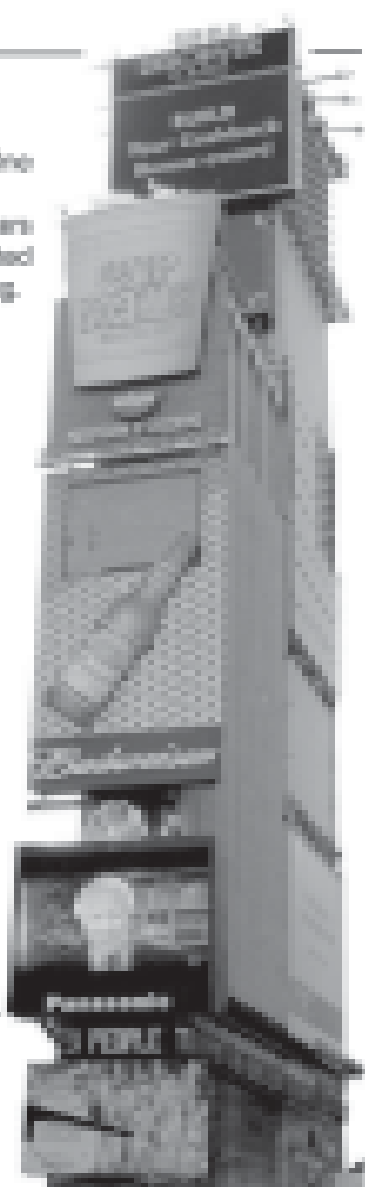
1934



1983

Today it's nearly vacant inside but covered with billboards outside, which earn millions of dollars from advertisement a year.

2003



SOURCE: AP/Quinn in New York City

halves are clipped onto the steel pole that rises toward the sky, along with steam wafting up from a giant "hot" noodle soup advertisement below.

On New Year's Eve, the rooftop will become a maze of cables and wires.

"The light power is the equivalent of a Broadway show," says John Trowbridge, a production lighting expert who will direct the crew looking down on hundreds of thousands of revelers expected at Times Square.

One Times Square opened a century ago as headquarters of The New York Times in what was then known as Long Acre Square. Originally called Times

Tower, the new limestone Beaux Arts structure was one of the tallest in the world.

The neighborhood was soon renamed Times Square, though the newspaper moved out a decade later. The news zipper, billed as the world's first moving sign, was added in 1928.

One Times Square remained a fairly ordinary office building through much of the last century. In the 1960s, Allied Chemical bought the graceful edifice, stripped it down to its steel core and recoating it with window panels.

The building passed through various hands as the neighborhood was transformed into today's family-friendly

hub. To its current owner, the flashy exterior and location matter most.

"If a sign was erected indicating that Times Square is the Crossroads of the World, it would be on this building," says Jeffrey Katz, head of Sherwood Equities, which manages the building.

Like its host, today's New Year's ball is a high-tech marvel with a computer-controlled electric motor and winch. The first ball—600 pounds of iron—was fueled mainly by imagination.

A Ukrainian-born metalworker was inspired by maritime practices born in the 18th century, when gold-painted "time" balls were lowered in seaports

to signal noon, allowing ships to set their navigation devices before sailing.

"The lowering of the ball in Times Square was an instant hit, one of those images people responded to on a very deep level, even if they didn't know why," says Artkraft Strauss president Tama Starr, who spent 19 New Year's Eves atop the building when her company ran the event.

"It was hard, cold work—harder than it looks," Starr wrote in her book, "Signs and Wonders: The Spectacular Marketing of America."

"But," she added, "magic always looks easy."



Byrne

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—David Byrne, an accomplished composer, photographer and lead singer of Talking Heads, has evolved—some would say devolved—into an unlikely artistic medium: PowerPoint.

Best known for vocals in "Psycho Killer" and "Burning Down the House," Byrne originally intended to spoof the ubiquitous software as a dumbed-down form of expression between communication-added business executives.

But after spending several hours designing a mock slide show, Byrne became intrigued. He decided to experiment with PowerPoint as an artistic medium—and ponder whether it shapes how we talk and think.

In his book and DVD compilation, "Envisioning Emotional Epistemological

Information," Byrne twists PowerPoint from a marketing tool into a multimedia canvas, pontificating that the software's charts, graphs, bullet points and arrows have changed communication styles.

"I just got carried away and started making stuff," Byrne said. "It communicates within certain limited parameters really well and very easily. The genius of it is that it was designed for any idiot to use. I learned it in a few hours, and that's the idea."

The 96-page compilation, which debuted in September for \$80, is best described as a coffee table book for nerds. The initial printing run of 1,500 copies sold out by mid-December.

The book includes mostly lucid musings on how PowerPoint has ushered in "the end of reason," with pic-

tures of bar charts gone hideously astray, fields of curved arrows that point at nothing, disturbing close-ups of wax hands and eyebrows, and a photo of Dolly the cloned sheep enclosed by punctuation brackets.

The 20-minute DVD, encased in the navy blue hardback cover, features the same abstractions in motion. Byrne wrote most of the music.

Byrne, 51, who was born in Scotland but has spent most of his adulthood in New York, said the compilation wasn't meant as a "serious statement about anything."

But by fixating on PowerPoint, Byrne—idolized by millions as a rock star for intellectuals—has stoked a fierce debate.

Visual artists say Microsoft Corp.'s

popular "slideware"—which makes it easy to incorporate animated graphics and other entertainment into presentations—lulls people into accepting pablum over ideas. Foes say PowerPoint's ubiquity perverts everything from elementary school reports to NASA's scientific theses into sales pitches with bullet points and stock art.

One of the Internet's inventors, Vint Cerf, gets laughs from audiences by quipping, "Power corrupts and PowerPoint corrupts absolutely."

Cerf, now an MCI executive and chairman of the Internet's key oversight body, doesn't shun PowerPoint completely, but said avoiding it "actually improves communication because people have to listen rather than being distracted by fancy PowerPoint charts."

Sumpter takes center stage in 'Peter Pan'

By **ANTHONY BREZNICAN**
AP ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Peter Pan" is about a boy who never grows up, but usually he's played by women who are old enough to be his mother.

In previous live-action films based on the J.M. Barrie story, the mystical flying troublemaker was played by Mary Martin, Cathy Rigby and even Mia Farrow. But in the latest version, he finally is being played by an actual 12-year-old—Jeremy Sumpter.

"The director, P.J. Hogan, told me that, 'Jeremy, you are Peter Pan. Just go in there and be yourself.' So I just went in there being Jeremy," he said.

So how does Jeremy describe himself? "Energetic, funny and going all over the place," he said. "And hyper."

The new film, which its makers describe as the most faithful to Barrie's original 1904 play and later novel, emphasizes the puppy-dog romance between Peter and Wendy, the daydreaming young girl who ventures with Peter to the mythical world of Never Land.

Amid the mermaids, Indians and swordfighting, Wendy and her two brothers—bookish John and baby Michael, encounter the grumpy, embittered Captain



In search of his shadow, Peter Pan (Jeremy Sumpter) and Tinker Bell (Ludivine Sagnier) arrive at the Darling nursery window in Universal Studios' "Peter Pan."

AP

Hook, who represents the worst in grown-ups.

Like almost any kid, Jeremy, now 14, talks a little fast, fidgets like he has ants in the pants and sees life as full of exclamation points.

His family brought him to Los Angeles when he was 9 for some open casting calls. His first role was in director-star Bill

Paxton's 2001 horror thriller "Frailty," as the youngest son of a man who thinks the world is filled with demons.

Jeremy said his favorite part of making "Peter Pan" was hanging on wires for the flying scenes. "Sometimes they shoot you straight up four stories high, then they would drop me and I shoot out like this—Whooooosh!—and

I'd fly around the whole stage," he said, rising from his chair. "I did all my own stunts except for one," he added, raising his index finger.

Which one? "That, I'm not going to say. I even did one that could have killed me if I didn't do it right ... well, not kill me, but it could have broken my ribs."

Then there's Tinker Bell. Al-

most everyone knows the graceful Marilyn Monroe lookalike fairy from Disney's "Peter Pan" cartoon. But Tinker Bell in the new movie is a little like the cartoon version's grumpier, messier twin.

"She's wild, she's dirty—she's quite rough," said French actress Ludivine Sagnier, who plays the pixie like a female ver-

sion of Charlie Chaplin's Little Tramp. "I didn't want her to be too glamorous and too much of an adult. We don't want her to be too sweet. We wanted Tinker Bell to be very clownish and cheeky."

But the pixie isn't all evil, Sagnier said. "It's just that she only has room for one emotion at a time."

'O Brother' producer climbs 'Mountain'

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—When producer T Bone Burnett set out to make the soundtrack to the Civil War-era film, "Cold Mountain," he drew as much from his love of rock 'n' roll as from traditional American music.

Burnett mixed period pieces with new songs written by contemporary rock artists Sting, Elvis Costello and Jack White of the White Stripes.

The challenge was to make the new songs sound authentic, and the old songs sound fresh.

"We did a lot of work, a lot of research," Burnett said. "I can't speak for Sting, but I can say Elvis and I both have been studying this music in different forms for a number of years, so the job was pretty clear."

The movie, starring Nicole Kidman, Jude Law and Renee Zellweger, opened Christmas Day. It is an adaptation of the best-selling novel "Cold Mountain" by Charles Frazier and tells the story of a wounded Confederate soldier who walks home to the North Carolina mountains to find his sweetheart.

Recorded in Nashville and Los Angeles, the soundtrack consists of 19 Appalachian-flavored acoustic songs, most of them modern interpretations of traditional pieces.

White is the most prominent artist, taking the lead on five tracks, including the standards "Sittin' on Top of the World," "Wayfaring Stranger" and "Great High Moun-

tain." He also wrote and performed "Never Far Away."

Costello and Burnett co-wrote "The Scarlet Tide" and Sting wrote and sang harmony on the Gaelic "You Will Be My Ain True Love"—both performed by bluegrass artist Alison Krauss.

Krauss said the project was intimidating.

"'Ain True Love' is a really different type of song," she said. "I had already heard Sting's version, and it was so perfect I couldn't help wondering, 'How am I going to match that?' You kind of have to separate yourself from it."

Burnett sees no incongruity in rockers writing and performing Appalachian ballads. He said Costello and Sting are great composers, and White's career reflects a deep knowledge of American music that includes country icons Johnny Cash and Loretta Lynn.

"To me, we were just making rock and roll," Burnett said. "Rock grew out of this, out of rebellion and defiance and a spiritual quest."

Two tracks—"I'm Going Home" and "Idumea"—feature Sacred Harp singing, a homespun musical form that predates the Civil War. Sacred Harp songs are performed in a group without any instruments and come from a tune book, "The Sacred Harp," first published in 1844. The book uses a system of printed shapes to help untrained singers read the music.

The Sacred Harp songs were recorded at Liberty Baptist Church on Alabama's Sand Mountain, a site chosen because of the church's rich acoustics.

"We put out a call for everybody to meet at the Sand Mountain church and 80 or 90 people showed up from all over the country," Burnett said. "We were there about eight hours and recorded 30 tunes."

Burnett, a blues and rock musician who has produced albums by Costello, the Counting Crows and The Wallflowers, has visited American roots music before. He produced the "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" and Cajun-flavored "Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood" soundtracks.

"O Brother," a collection of post-Civil War blues, country, bluegrass and gospel tunes, was a huge success, selling more than 6 million copies and winning a Grammy Award for album of the year.

Krauss, who also performs on the "O Brother" soundtrack, said acoustic music sounds fresh because it receives so little exposure on radio and television.

"I always said if people just had a chance to hear this music they would love it," she said.

With its rootsy sound, "Cold Mountain" is bound to draw comparisons to "O Brother." Burnett warns that listeners will find the music on "Cold Mountain" much darker.

tribune
subscription

Woman wonders if new friend is prince of light or darkness

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: I was physically and emotionally abused by my parents. Mother left home when I was 11. When I was in my early 20s, I was attacked and raped by a stranger. I have been through many abusive relationships and several failed marriages. My last two boyfriends were sexually abusive. Now I'm afraid of men, and especially afraid of sex.

About a month ago, I met a man who seemed nice. He gave me his number. A week later when I lost my job, I called him to see if he knew of any openings. He invited me over to look at my resume, and I went.

We began a deep friendship. I told him things about my past that gave me low self-esteem. He told me he had studied counseling and asked if he could work with me. I agreed.

His help has brought back many painful memories, and we are dealing with them together. He says things to improve my self-esteem. He believes in me and wants me to have a better future. He even hinted he'd like to be part of that future. His tenderness is incredible, and I find myself melting into his arms.

Now for the bad part: He told me that he spent 25 years in prison. Although he is no longer the same person who committed those crimes, he was incarcerated once for rape and two years later for sexual assault. He now has erectile dysfunction, so I know he couldn't do it again, even if he wanted to.

I am starting to care for him a lot, but at the same time I'm scared of him. I don't believe he would ever harm me, but ever since he told me the truth, I've been having nightmares about someone chasing me and trying to hurt me.

Should I stop seeing him? He does everything he can to reassure me that he won't hurt me, and I want to believe him. Please help.

SCARED IN FLORIDA

DEAR SCARED: Your subconscious may be warning you. A synonym for "chased" is "pursued," and in a sense, this man is pursuing you. He is not a licensed therapist. He is a serial perpetrator of sex crimes. Sexual assaults are sometimes less about sex than they are about control. In other words, rape is not always physical; it can also be emotional.

Although you may be infatuated, you have only known this man for a month. That's not long enough to make rational judgments. You may have placed yourself in the hands of a skilled manipulator as well as a sexual deviate. Do NOT allow an amateur to doodle with the strudel in your noodle. If you want to conquer your problems, consult a qualified, licensed therapist.

P.S. Did he help you find a job, or were you lured to his dwelling to be seduced? Only you can answer that.

DEAR ABBY: My cousin, "Debbie," will be married next October. We have never been close. She was supposed to be in my wedding, but she never showed up for the fitting, so I replaced her with a friend.

My dilemma: She told me my husband is not invited to her wedding because the dinner is \$100 a plate and no spouses or boyfriends are allowed.

What do you think I should do?

INSULTED IN OHIO

DEAR INSULTED: Politely inform cousin Debbie that you will be unable to attend her wedding, and send a small token gift instead. She is obviously ignorant of the fact that a married couple, unlike boyfriends and girlfriends, are officially one unit, and that it is a breach of etiquette to invite one and exclude the other.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$10 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in price.)



Dear Abby

Rapper Juvenile faces arrest warrant

ATLANTA (AP)—New Orleans-based rapper Juvenile, known for his hit song "Back That Thang Up," is facing an arrest warrant in Georgia on child abandonment charges.

Gwinnett County sheriff's deputies say the multi-platinum artist, whose real name is Terius Gray, has failed to provide financial support for a six-month-old daughter. Deputies say they have paternity test results that show Gray is the child's father—an allegation the rapper disputes.

"To suggest he is a deadbeat dad couldn't be further from the truth," said Tim Fry, one of Gray's lawyers.

The Gwinnett County sheriff's department obtained an arrest warrant for Gray in November.



Juvenile

vember.

"Technically, he is a fugitive from justice," Lt. Nick Neal said. "We have this warrant in the system and we will wait for an opportunity to arrest him in a jurisdiction that will extradite him here."

Hootie & the Blowfish endorse John Edwards

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP)—Hootie & the Blowfish have endorsed Democratic presidential hopeful John Edwards, who hails from the state where the rock band got its start.

Members of the band, who are University of South Carolina alumni, will join Edwards on Saturday when he officially files for the South Carolina Democratic primary.

Edwards, who stresses on the

campaign trail that he's the son of a South Carolina millworker from Seneca, is a North Carolina senator.

"South Carolina's band is coming out for South Carolina's candidate," said Edwards spokeswoman Jenni Engebretsen.

The band's lawyer, Richard "Gus" Gusler, said the rock group is planning a performance in South Carolina before the state's primary Feb. 3.

Mellencamp nephew to play Ind. soccer

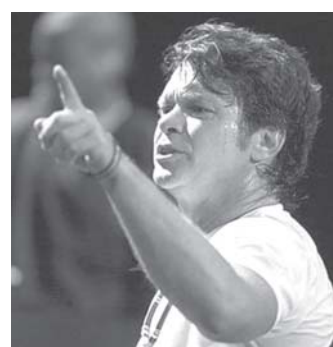
BLOOMINGTON, Ind. (AP)—One of Indiana University's key soccer recruits for 2004 has a name that's already familiar in Bloomington: John Mellencamp.

Mellencamp is a nephew of the 52-year-old rocker, who lives in Bloomington. He's made a verbal commitment to play at Indiana, where the soccer team holds indoor practice in the John Mellencamp Pavilion.

"I don't know what it'll be like to attend a school where they already have a building named after you," Joe Mellencamp, John's father, told The Herald-Times for a story Friday.

The younger Mellencamp, an all-Ohio player, already is familiar with the Indiana soccer program. He was MVP at its soccer camp in 2001 and 2003.

"It was always a dream of mine to play at Indiana, so when



Mellencamp

I got the chance, I wanted to pursue it," Mellencamp said.

John isn't the only Mellencamp to play soccer. His older brother, Ian, played two years of soccer at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.

"But Ian gave up soccer to play guitar, and has his own band, now. I wonder where that came from?" Joe Mellencamp said.

Martin attracted Welling to 'Cheaper'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Tom Welling of the hit WB series "Smallville" is serious about comedy, but you wouldn't know it from his latest role. The 25-year-old plays a straight man in the slapstick family film "Cheaper by the Dozen," which stars comic veteran Steve Martin as his father.

"I'm the only one who's not funny," Welling says of his character—the family's older brother, Charlie.

Welling, who plays a

young Clark Kent in "Smallville," says he's serious about making people laugh. He's examined Jerry Seinfeld's recent documentary, and says he was attracted to "Cheaper by the Dozen" by the chance to work with Martin.

The movie is a remake of the 1950s family comedy about 12 children being raised in a household made even more chaotic by their parents' demanding careers.

The film, which opened Christmas Day, also stars Bonnie Hunt and Hilary Duff.

Welling

Pastimes

WONDERWORD
By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

ABOUT ACORNS Solution: 7 letters

E P A H S F A R M T H S U R C
O L A V O M R E H T A G E H S
A L K T A A K U E G R N I S T
S E E S R R E R G I O N P N C U
T E S R R T A D O T M I E I N
C R E N R R S V E U N L W H N
E T E E O I E E N R L A T O O
S L S T S I U K R O E G L Y S
N N S E A H T Q C O N Y L P A
I W A A V G E A S E F P A E E
Y O C N E R F L R B P H B L S
I R O N H O A T L U T D U © K
E B R U R U S H S R T P O © L
L T N A D N U B A Y U A O © A
D T Y L C D S E I C E P S © W

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Abundant, Acorn, Amass, Annual, Ball, Brown, Bury, Carry, Chipmunk, Collect, Crush, Cupule, Earth, Farm, Foray, Forest, Fruit, Gather, Groove, Ground, Grow, Harvest, Hoard, Hunt, Insects, Insert, Kernel, Layered, Nuts, Oval, Plant, Pork, Saturation, Save, Season, Shape, Shell, Sowing, Species, Squirrel, Storage, Strength, Supply, Tannin, Tree, Uses, Walks, Woodpecker, Yield.
Last Saturday's Answer: Quicksand
NOTE: Postage and handling charges have changed for The Collected Wonderword. Add \$3 for the first book ordered, \$1 more for each additional book. Volumes 17 and 18 are \$5.95 each, payable to Universal Press Syndicate. Send to WONDERWORD, 4500 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. 64111 or call toll-free 1-800-255-8754, ext. 4813.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Ritzy auto
4 Limb
7 — -back (mellow)
11 Tackle-box item
13 Feathery accessory
14 Wheel-base terminus
15 — partridge in ...
16 Massachusetts cape
17 He got the point across to his son
18 Vigorous enthusiasm
20 Creche trio
22 Cartesian conclusion
24 Om, e.g.
28 Linus' calmer
32 Small fire-cracker
33 Verdi opera
34 "Joan of Arcadia" figure

DOWN
36 Caspian Sea feeder
37 Appears to be
39 Feminine ic's task
41 Mechanic's mess up
43 Scrutinize
46 Pilfered
50 African gully
53 "Believe It Or —!"
55 For all time
56 Grand-scale tale
57 Fast-running bird
58 Pealed
59 Sicilian spouter
60 4-Across counterpart
61 Old card game
Put one's feat in one's mouth
2 Carte
3 Becomes one
4 Jennings' employer
5 Leeway
6 My brothel's keeper
7 Artsy area of Paris
8 Feller's tool
9 Under the weather
10 N.J. neighbor
12 Mexico and points south
19 Erstwhile acorn
21 Petrol
23 "Little Women" sister
25 Pivot
26 Money of Oman
27 With skill
28 Woody fiber
29 Stead
30 Indian Ocean gulf
31 AAA assignment
35 Fawn's mom
38 Seek restitution
40 — Doubtfire
42 "Cross-fire" group
45 Cupola
47 Ellipse
48 Comic Jay
49 Therefore
50 Teensy
51 Likely
52 Cacophony
54 Yank

Solution time: 24 mins.

C	U	B	I	C	S	P	I	K	E			
S	O	N	O	R	A	H	I	D	I	N	G	
K	E	E	P	E	R	E	L	A	P	S	E	
E	V	A	S	P	E	L	L	P	I	N		
W	A	S	P	I	L	L	P	E	L	T		
S	L	E	E	P	M	A	T	U	R	E	S	
	R	A	H		C	O	M					
B	A	C	K	L	O	G	E	P	O	C	H	
E	N	O	S		A	L	D		S	U	R	E
A	G	O		C	R	O	C	S		T	E	A
R	E	P	R	O	S		C	A	P	P	E	R
S	L	E	E	V	E		A	B	R	U	P	T
A	R	D	E	N		B	E	E	T	S		

Saturday's answer 1-12

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY
Andrew Lawrence, Kirstie Alley, Howard Stern, Rush Limbaugh

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: You may be inclined to take on too much this year. Instead, focus on what you do best and don't travel outside your realm of possibility. Being smart about your future and refraining from being impulsive will be the key. Your numbers are 2, 10, 13, 22, 31, 40



ARIES (March 21-April 19)
Lots can be accomplished today, especially with job prospects. Going for an interview or talking to someone who can help you find a better position will bring positive results. ★★★



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Love and romance will probably be on your mind today. Decide what you really want and pursue it. Creative projects should not be pushed aside. Physical enhancement will bring positive results. ★★★★★



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
Your restlessness will get the better of you today. Don't make changes that are not in your best interest. Real estate and investment opportunities are present. ★★



CANCER (June 21-July 22)
It's time to straighten out the misconceptions people have about who you are and what you want to do. Voice your thoughts and you will get the support and help you need. ★★★★★



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
Business enterprise should be your concern. Look for a better position or advancement where you already work. Expand your interests. ★★★



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
You may not have your usual practical outlook today. Proceed with caution. You might want to reconsider your job position as well as your personal situation. ★★★



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
Take every opportunity to straighten out matters that involve government agencies, banks or other institutions. Talk to an adviser regarding your financial situation. Home improvement projects can be started today. ★★★



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Partnerships can be formed that will enable you to accomplish your goals. Opportunities to meet new people will lead to new friendships. Love should be on your mind. ★★★★★



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
You may find yourself caught in an emotional whirlwind. You don't like personal confrontations, but it's best to face your dilemma head-on. ★★



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Your ability to put things into perspective and to offer excellent solutions will put you into the spotlight at any group meeting you attend. Talk and travel will be the two main concerns of your day. ★★★★★



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
You will have all sorts of moneymaking opportunities today, but the possibility of picking the wrong deal is evident. Don't think that big is best. Take the more conservative deal. ★★★



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
Don't fret about ongoing problems. Instead, start talking about what you need to have happen to make an important union work better. ★★★

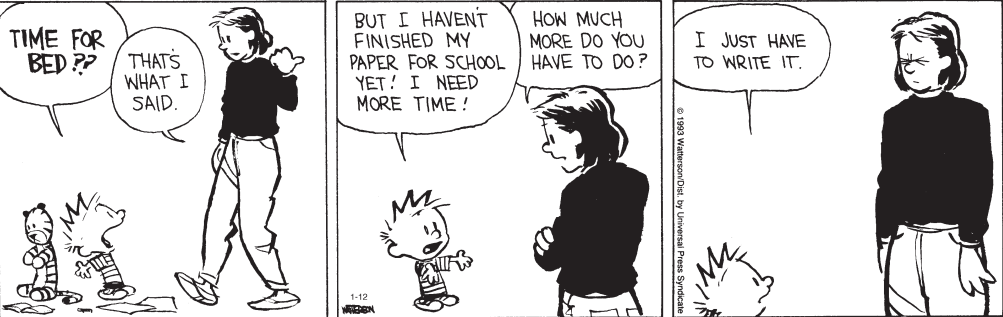
BIRTHDAY BABY: You are intent on following your own path regardless of the consequences. You are difficult to keep up with. You question everything and everyone and are always in pursuit of knowledge.

(Need advice? Check out Eugenia on the Web at www.astroadvice.com or www.eugenialast.com.)

Ziggy®

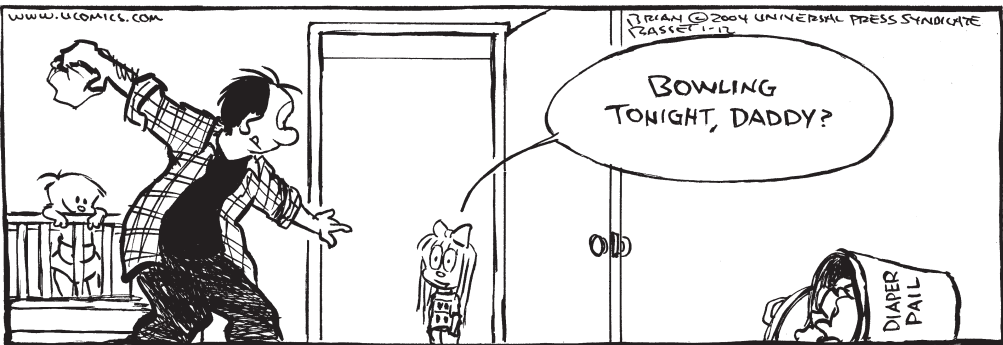


Calvin and Hobbes



Adam@home

By Brian Basset



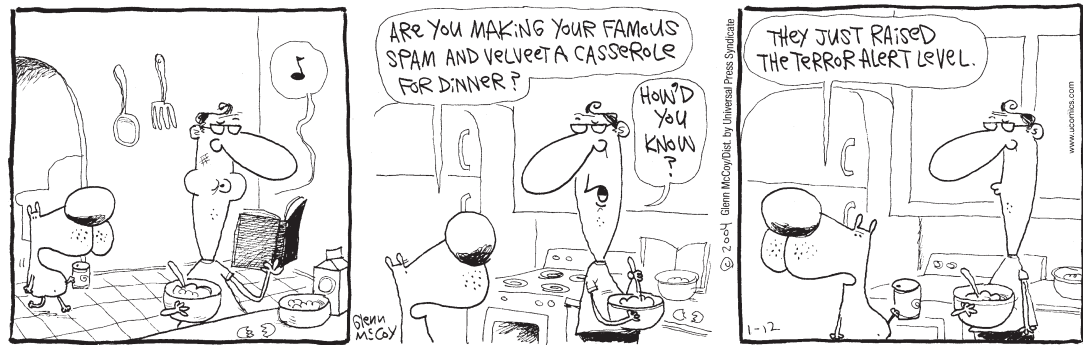
Garfield®

by Jim Davis



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



Team Standings		
Group A		
SIP-Verizon	4	0
Bayani	2	2
SMF	2	2
CCA	2	2
MDX	0	4
Group B		
Visminda	4	1
Cabalen	4	1
Mobil-LIPS	4	1
Bicol	1	3
MIFICPA	1	3
Samahang Laguna	0	5



Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	T
Yankees	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	1	7
Academy	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	2	1	8

SPORTS BRIEFS

Trail Blazers defeat the Lakers, 112-108

By ANNE M. PETERSON
AP SPORTS WRITER



PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Damon Stoudamire hit two 3-pointers in the final minutes and the Portland Trail Blazers handed the Los Angeles Lakers their second loss in two nights with a 112-108 victory Saturday night.

Stoudamire finished with 25 points and eight assists for the Trail Blazers, who returned home to snap a three-game losing streak.

After Kobe Bryant's layup evened it at 99, Rasheed Wallace hit a pair of free throws to put the Blazers ahead, and Zach Randolph hit an 8-foot jumper to make it 103-99.

Shaquille O'Neal's layup narrowed it for the Lakers, but Stoudamire's 3-pointer put the Blazers ahead 106-101 with 2:08 left.

Stoudamire hit another one to put the Blazers up 109-104 but a pair of foul shots kept the Lakers in it until Wallace's jumper bounced several times before falling to make it 111-106 and Portland held on for the final margin.

Wallace, who stirred controversy with a contentious interview earlier in the week, had 28 points and seven rebounds to help Portland improve to 11-4 at home.

The night before, the Lakers fell to the Dallas Mavericks 110-93, their first loss at home in 13 games this season. The loss to Dallas snapped a 10-game overall winning streak.

Bryant led the Lakers with 35 points, and O'Neal had 22 points and 10 rebounds.

The Blazers, who led by as many as 10, jumped out to an early 13-6 lead on Randolph's

layup. Los Angeles narrowed it to 19-18 on Karl Malone's jumper, but Portland responded with Wallace's 3-pointer and Dale Davis' dunk.

After the Blazers took a 47-37 lead on Stoudamire's 3-pointer, the Lakers went on a 12-2 run to even it at 49, and the teams were even at 54 at halftime.

Bryant, who did not even take a shot in the first quarter, scored 11 points in the second.

The Lakers went up 70-67 on O'Neal's consecutive dunks, and led by as many as five points - but the Blazers kept it close and the two teams went on to trade the lead nine times in the third quarter.

Randolph had 24 points and 11 rebounds for Portland.

Wallace received a number of boos from the home fans when he was introduced before the game.

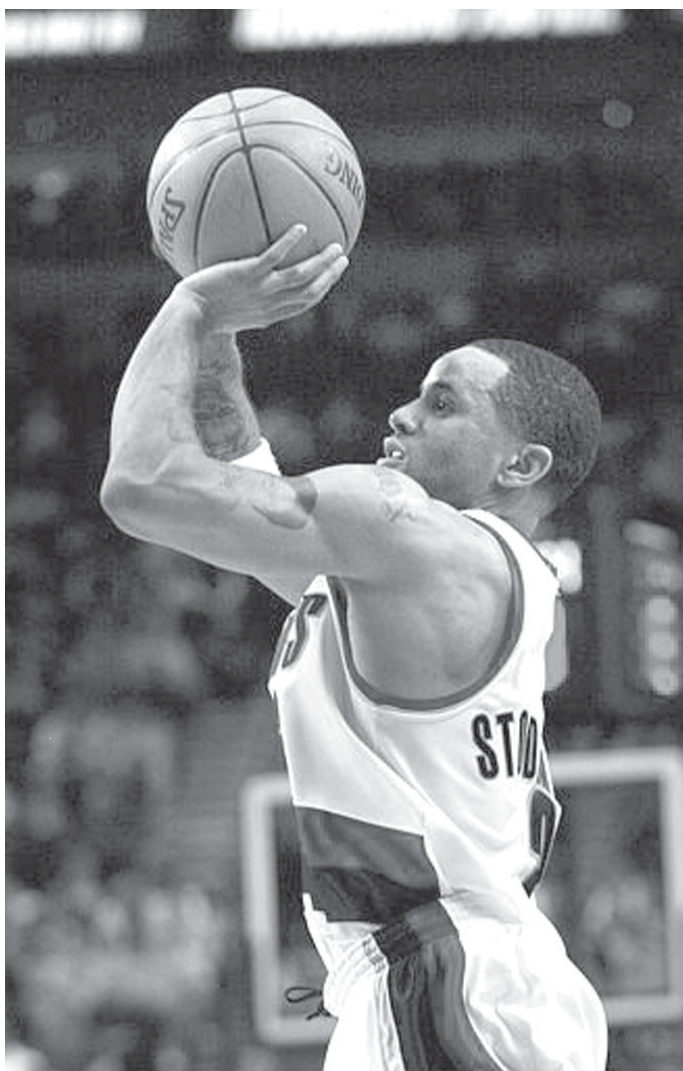
Wallace charged in an interview earlier in the week that the NBA's white establishment is exploiting young black athletes to enrich itself. He also used objectionable language.

There was widespread criticism of the comments, including a statement from NBA commissioner David Stern. Wallace issued an apology before the game, saying he regretted using the objectionable language but stood by his right to express his opinions.

Knicks 95, Nuggets 88

At New York, Antonio McDyess scored a season-high 15 points against the team that traded him nearly 18 months ago, leading the New York Knicks past the Denver Nuggets 95-88 to snap a six-game losing streak.

McDyess made his first start since March of 2002, replacing Kurt Thomas (sore knee) on New York's front line.



Portland Trail Blazers forward Damon Stoudamire shoots for two during the second half of their game with the Los Angeles Lakers Saturday, Dec. 13, 2003, in Portland, Ore.

Carmelo Anthony led Denver with 25 points, and Marcus Camby added 12 points and 12 rebounds in his first appearance at Madison Square Garden since the Knicks sent him to Denver as part of the five-player trade that brought McDyess to New York.

Clippers 106, Suns 91

At Los Angeles, Quentin Richardson scored 25 points and Corey Maggette had 23 in the Los Angeles Clippers' 106-91

victory over Phoenix, the Suns' fifth straight loss.

Stephon Marbury had 30 points, nine assists and seven rebounds for the Suns.

Spurs 86, Rockets 73

At San Antonio, Manu Ginobili scored 16 points and Tony Parker had 14 points and 12 assists to help San Antonio beat Houston for the second time in three days, 86-73.

Steve Francis paced Houston with 17 points, 13 of them in the

second half. Yao Ming and Jim Jackson each had 11 points.

Bulls 86, Pacers 75

At Chicago, Jamal Crawford and Kirk Hinrich scored 18 points apiece and the Chicago Bulls used a 16-0 third-quarter run to beat the Indiana Pacers 86-75.

Indiana, tied for the most road wins in the NBA with nine, got 23 points from Ron Artest, including the Pacers' first 10 in a 15-point fourth quarter.

Grizzlies 110, Nets 63

At Memphis, Tenn., Bonzi Wells had 22 points in the Memphis Grizzlies' most lopsided victory in franchise history, a 110-63 victory over the New Jersey Nets.

Memphis had six players in double figures, including Mike Miller and Swift with 18 each. Miller also had seven assists.

Pau Gasol had 12 points and nine rebounds, and Lorenzen Wright and Earl Watson had 10 points each.

Kenyon Martin led New Jersey with 12 points. Aaron Williams and Jason Kidd, with 4-of-14 shooting, had 10 points each.

Celtics 105, Cavaliers 98

At Cleveland, Paul Pierce scored a season-high 41 points and stole the ball from LeBron James in the final minute to help the Boston Celtics win their fifth straight game, 105-98 over the Cleveland Cavaliers.

James scored a season-high 37 points, but Cleveland's rookie star missed a 3-pointer in the last two minutes and was stripped by Pierce with 15 seconds to go.

Magic 105, Hawks 102

At Atlanta, Tracy McGrady capped a late rally with a 20-foot jumper, giving the Orlando Magic a 105-102 victory over

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	12	11	.522	-
Boston	12	12	.500	1/2
New Jersey	11	12	.478	1
New York	8	16	.333	4 1/2
Miami	7	15	.318	4 1/2
Washington	7	15	.318	4 1/2
Orlando	4	20	.167	8 1/2

Central Division

Indiana	18	6	.750	-
New Orleans	17	7	.708	1
Toronto	13	9	.591	4
Detroit	14	10	.583	4
Milwaukee	11	12	.478	6 1/2
Atlanta	7	18	.280	11 1/2
Chicago	6	16	.273	11
Cleveland	6	17	.261	11 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Midwest Division

Dallas	14	8	.636	-
Denver	14	9	.609	1/2
San Antonio	15	10	.600	1/2
Houston	13	9	.591	1
Memphis	13	9	.591	1
Minnesota	13	9	.591	1
Utah	12	10	.545	2

Pacific Division

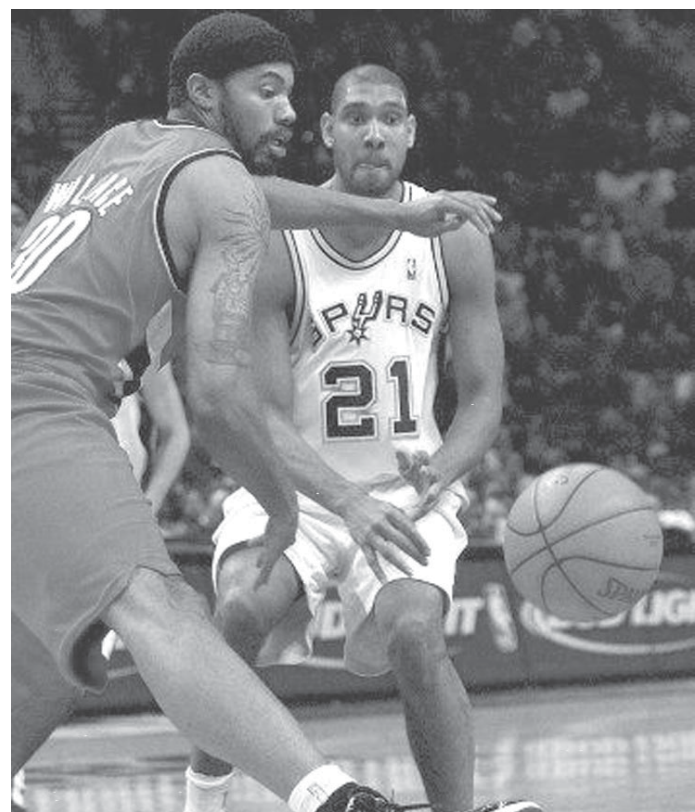
L.A. Lakers	18	5	.783	-
Sacramento	15	5	.750	1 1/2
Portland	11	10	.524	6
Seattle	10	10	.500	6 1/2
Golden State	10	11	.476	7
L.A. Clippers	8	11	.421	8
Phoenix	8	15	.348	10

By the Associated Press

the Atlanta Hawks.

Shammond Williams finished off the comeback with a steal and five free throws, helping the Magic win for the third time in four games after losing 19 straight. McGrady had 30 points.

Shareef Abdur-Rahim had 25 for the Hawks, who have lost seven of their last eight games. Stephen Jackson added 20 points and Dion Glover had 19.



Portland Trail Blazers forward Rasheed Wallace (30) tries to block a pass by San Antonio Spurs forward Tim Duncan (21) during the second quarter in San Antonio, Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2003.

Wallace apologizes for interview language

By ANNE M. PETERSON
AP SPORTS WRITER

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Portland Trail Blazers forward Rasheed Wallace apologized Saturday for using objectionable language in an interview in which he criticized the NBA's "white establishment."

"I made a few comments that some people found objectionable," Wallace said in a statement. "Like everyone, I have a right to express an opinion, which I did."

"But, I regret using street language to express my opinion because everyone has focused on these few comments when I said other things. It was not my intent to offend anyone."

Wallace's statement, issued before the Blazers' game against the Los Angeles Lakers, was punctuated by his apology.

"So, if I offended any of my

teammates, fellow NBA players, the Trail Blazer fans and organization, I apologize," he said. "I have nothing more to say about this matter."

On Friday, NBA commissioner David Stern called Wallace's comments to The Oregonian newspaper "ignorant and offensive to all NBA players."

In a wide-ranging interview published Thursday, Wallace charged that the league's white establishment is exploiting young black athletes to enrich itself.

The 29-year-old Wallace said he's not like the younger players who get "caught up and captivated into the league."

"No. I see behind the lines. I see behind the false screens. I know what this business is all about. I know the commissioner of this league makes more than three-quarters of the players in this league," he said.

Some of Wallace's comments included objectionable language.

"Mr. Wallace's hateful diatribe was ignorant and offensive to all NBA players," Stern said. "I refuse to enhance his heightened sense of deprivation by publicly debating with him."

"Since Mr. Wallace did not direct his comments at any particular individuals other than me, I think it best to leave it to the Trail Blazers' organization and its players and fans to determine the attitudes by which they wish to be defined."

Wallace, in his eighth year with Portland, is set to earn nearly \$17 million this season. He is averaging 16.4 points and 7.3 rebounds.

Last season, Wallace was suspended by the league for seven games for threatening an official on the loading dock at the Rose Garden Arena after a game. It was the longest suspension

ever handed down that did not involve physical contact or substance abuse.

In the 2000-01 season, he set the NBA record with 41 technical fouls.

Wallace's comments are the latest problem to befall the Blazers, who have been plagued by player arrests and team infighting since last season.

"I agree with the commissioner that there is no reason to continue the public debate on this issue," Blazers president Steve Patterson said.

Lakers coach Phil Jackson said that as a former player, he understands the idea of questioning authority, but said Wallace hurt himself by injecting race into the issue.

"It's not about the money, it's about the little things that go with the job that I think gets to some of the players," Jackson said.

Okla. QB Jason White wins Heisman Trophy

By JOSH DUBOW
AP SPORTS WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—Jason White capped a remarkable comeback with college football's most prestigious award, winning the Heisman Trophy on Saturday night a year after an injury nearly ended his career.

The Oklahoma quarterback, who almost quit football following his second major knee injury in September 2002, beat out Pittsburgh receiver Larry Fitzgerald by 128 points for the award.

"Last year about this time, I was sitting at home watching the Heisman and thought how neat it would be to be there, to be one of the finalists," White said. "I never thought, after two surgeries, that I'd be here."

White threw 40 touchdown passes and led the third-ranked Sooners to 12 straight wins to open the season and a spot in the Bowl Championship Series title game against No. 2 LSU.

Even a subpar performance in a loss in the Big 12 title game last week against Kansas State couldn't stop White from winning the award. His three months of brilliance before that were more than enough to persuade voters to pick him.

White, The Associated Press Player of the Year, led the nation in passing efficiency, completing 64 percent of his passes for 3,744 yards and only eight interceptions.

White beat Fitzgerald 1,481-1,353. Eli Manning was third with 710 points and Chris Perry was next with 341.

Voters list three choices on their ballots, and players are awarded three points for first place, two for second and one for third.

White, the first Oklahoma player

since Billy Sims in 1978 to win the Heisman, had 319 first-place votes, 204 seconds and 116 thirds.

Fitzgerald, who set an NCAA record with touchdown catches in 18 straight games, had 253 firsts, 233 seconds and 128 thirds. He was trying to become the first sophomore to win the award.

Manning became the third member of his family to come close but fall short for the Heisman. His father, Archie, finished fourth in 1969 and third the following year, while older brother, Peyton, came in second in 1997.

Manning, who passed for 3,341 yards with 27 touchdowns this season, had 95 firsts, 132 seconds and 161 thirds.

Perry, who was fifth in the nation with 132.4 yards rushing per game and also scored 19 touchdowns, came in fourth with 27 firsts, 66 seconds and 128 thirds.

Three of the four finalists struggled with their conference titles on the line, with only Perry delivering in a 204-yard, two-TD game in a 35-21 victory against Ohio State.

Just as one bad game didn't stop Oklahoma from making it to the Sugar Bowl, it also didn't stop White, who was helped by the 50 percent of voters who cast their ballots before that game. Fitzgerald got the most points from people who voted in the final week, but it wasn't enough to catch White.

White became the fourth Sooner to win the Heisman, joining Sims, Steve Owens (1969) and Billy Vessels (1952). Sims was sitting with his former coach, Barry Switzer, in the audience and yelled encouragement to White as he walked up to accept the award.

White is hoping to become the third quarterback to win the Heisman and the national title in the same season, joining Florida State's Charlie Ward (1993)

and Florida's Danny Wuerffel (1996).

Recent Heisman-winning quarterbacks haven't fared so well, with Florida State's Chris Weinke (2000) and Nebraska's Eric Crouch (2001) both following up their Heisman wins with subpar title-game performances.

Kansas State running back Darren Sproles was fifth, followed by Southern California quarterback Matt Leinart, North Carolina State quarterback Philip Rivers, USC receiver Mike Williams, Miami of Ohio quarterback Ben Roethlisberger and Texas Tech quarterback B.J. Symons.

A regional voting breakdown had White winning the Far West, Southwest and South regions. Fitzgerald won the Midwest, Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.

The award completes an amazing transformation that began on Sept. 7, 2002, when White crumpled to the turf against Alabama with a torn right knee ligament. He had injured the same ligament on the other knee a year earlier and contemplated quitting the sport he loves.

His father persuaded him not to give up and White soon began the hard road back.

"I wanted to be back on the field with my teammates," White said. "For a while, it didn't seem like it would happen."

Hours of rehab finally paid off when coach Bob Stoops told White he won a four-way competition for the job before the start of fall practice.

In a season where remaining healthy and keeping the starting job would have been a great accomplishment, White did so much more.

The small-town kid from Tuttle, Okla., quickly answered all those questions. Performing in stadiums with nearly 20 times as many fans as live in his home town, displayed the poise and



AP
Oklahoma's quarterback Jason White (18) passes in the first quarter against Texas Tech in Lubbock, Texas, in this Nov. 22, 2003 photo. White won the 2003 Heisman Trophy, awarded Saturday, Dec. 13, 2003 in New York.

touch necessary to turn Oklahoma into a record-setting offense.

He threw at least two touchdowns in his first 12 games, including 13 in the three games before the Big 12 championship. His pinpoint accuracy helped his receivers break big runs after the catch and helped the team score at least 50

points seven times this season.

"His emergence as a great, great football player is the story of college football," Stoops said. "The biggest difference in our team is that Jason White is the quarterback. It ought to be pretty obvious."

It turned out it was to the Heisman voters.

Red Sox sign Keith Foulke; Yanks get RHP Kevin Brown

By BEN WALKER
AP BASEBALL WRITER



NEW ORLEANS (AP)—The Boston Red Sox revved-up the AL East arms race by closing a deal for All-Star closer Keith Foulke on Saturday, hours before the New York Yankees completed their trade for Kevin Brown.

In a flurry of activity at the winter meetings, outfielders Mike Cameron, J.D. Drew and Juan Encarnacion found new homes.

Roger Clemens just may have one, too. In town for a function, he left open the possibility of coming out of retirement to pitch for the Houston Astros.

Cameron personally came to the fringe of the French Quarter this week, hoping to get a deal done. The free agent found one with the New York Mets.

The Yankees finalized their swap with Los Angeles, getting Brown for Jeff Weaver and two other players.

"To walk into a clubhouse that's going to be filled with people who have such a great history of playing winning ball, it's a great opportunity for me at the end of my career," Brown said.

Atlanta filled its need for a right fielder by obtaining Drew in a five-player trade with St. Louis. Desperate for hitters, Los Angeles acquired Encarnacion from Florida.



AP
American League pitcher Keith Foulke of the Oakland Athletics delivers in the ninth inning of the 74th annual All Star game, Tuesday, July 15, 2003, at U.S. Cellular Field in Chicago.

Foulke decided against re-signing with Oakland. Instead, the free agent reliever who led the AL with 43 saves last season reached agreement with the Red Sox on a deal that guarantees him \$24 million.

"I want to be a winner before I go out," Foulke said.

Foulke got a three-year deal with an option for a fourth season, completing

the contract after taking a physical.

"We acquired Keith Foulke not because he's a closer, but because we believe he's one of the best pitchers in baseball," Red Sox general manager Theo Epstein said.

Foulke joins starter Curt Schilling as top pitchers acquired by the Red Sox since the season ended. Boston also is talking about getting AL MVP Alex

Rodriguez from Texas in a trade for Manny Ramirez.

"It was a solid team before they added Curt Schilling. That really showed their commitment to winning," Foulke said.

The 31-year-old righty was 9-1 with and a 2.08 ERA for Oakland last season.

The Red Sox haven't won the World Series since 1918, with the Yankees often getting in the way. Since losing in this year's Series, the Yankees have traded for pitchers Javier Vazquez and Brown.

The Yankees also lost Andy Pettitte to Houston, and there remains a chance that Clemens might join him to pitch for the hometown Astros.

The Rocket was in New Orleans for a banquet and said that while he still considers himself retired, he's at least thinking about playing for Houston.

"I know Roger has told me he was retiring. That was our understanding," Yankees GM Brian Cashman said. "But I also understand he's a human being. We all have a chance to change our minds and that's life."

In a deal that's been brewing, the Yankees got Brown for Weaver, minor league pitcher Yhency Brazoban and a player to be named. Brown, 38, is a six-time All-Star.

After letting loose Gary Sheffield - who is close to going to the Yankees, too - the Braves wanted a right fielder with a good bat. They hope they found

one in Drew, getting him with all-purpose player Eli Marrero from St. Louis for pitchers Jason Marquis, Adam Wainwright and Ray King.

"Adam is our No. 1 pitching prospect and that was tough to do, but under the circumstances we had no choice," Atlanta GM John Schuerholz said.

Drew, 28, has been full of promise since becoming the fifth pick of the 1998 draft. But he's been hurt a lot, going on the disabled list five times in the last four years.

Drew hit .289 last season with 15 homers and 42 RBIs in 100 games.

"He's been a guy that has been touted with all kinds of talent through the years," Braves manager Bobby Cox said. "Unfortunately, he's had all kinds of injuries."

Cameron reached agreement with the Mets on a three-year deal for \$19.5 million. The former Gold Glove center fielder must pass a physical before the deal is done.

The Dodgers were eager to add offense after scoring a major league-low 574 runs last season. Encarnacion, 27, joined catcher Ivan Rodriguez, first baseman Derek Lee and closer Ugueth Urbina as players to leave the Marlins since they won the title.

Encarnacion hit .270 with 19 home runs and 94 RBIs last season. He had a team-high 37 doubles and also stole 19 bases. He hasn't made an error in his last 220 games.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Table tennis singles tourney tomorrow

The Marianas Amateur Table Tennis Association is inviting the public to join the 2004 MATTA Open Singles Table Tennis Tournament.

The tournament will begin tomorrow and will continue throughout the rest of the month. It will be held Tuesday and Thursday nights at the multi-purpose room of the Gilbert C. Ada Ada Gymnasium.

The tournament format will be round-robin type of competition for the initial round where each participant will play all the other members of their division once.

Those who win the most games will move on to the elimination phase and playoffs.

Admission fee for the tournament will be \$10 per participant. Trophies will be presented to the winners of their respective divisions during an after-tournament dinner.

Children who wish to participate should inform their parents and ask for their consent. For more information please call Steve Lim at 483-7842.

21st Island Relay set for Dec. 28

Officials of the 21st Annual Christmas Island Relay announced that this year's 13.7-mile team event is set to take place during the early morning hours of December 28.

The starting point of the course will be at the Pacific Islands Club south parking lot. Participants will then head north and work their way to the finish line at the Last Command Post in Marpi.

Interested teams may register at the starting point of the race, which will be at the Pacific Islands Club south parking lot in San Antonio. Registration begins at 5:15am.

Each team, which consists of five members, must switch runners every mile. It is also required that each team has at least one female participant or a participant who is under the age of 16 or in the senior division. Prior to competing, all teams must pay a fee of \$25.

For more information about the 21st Annual Christmas Island Relay, please contact Elias Rangamar at 234-1001 or 1002.

Budweiser Cup on Jan. 12

Officials of the much-awaited Basketball Association of the Northern Mariana Islands Budweiser Cup have decided to push back the kick of date of the 2003 island-wide men's basketball season to January 12 of next year.

So far, 10 teams have shown interest in participating in the league. Only eight, however, are confirmed to battle for the championship crown and the \$1,000 grand prize that goes along with it. Also at stake are the \$300 prize for the runner-up and the \$200 award for the second runner-up.

Each team interested in taking part in the season is required to pay an entrance fee of \$900 that must be payable to BANMI.

Aside from the prizes awarded to the top three finishers, other prizes may be claimed through a half-court shot competition and a three-point contest.

For more information, please contact Rangamar at 664-2500 or Abner Venus at 234-5911.

SPG Council launches logo contest

The South Pacific Games Council Executive Board has announced that it will be selecting a new logo for the SPG Council. The winning logo will be selected from designs submitted through the national sports federations represented on the Council.

The contest is open to everyone. The general public is invited to submit design proposals. The Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association will select one or more of the designs submitted to it, for transmission to the SPG Council.

All entries should be submitted to NMASA President Michael A. White. The selection of a new design will take place at the SPG Council assembly in Palau next year.

For further information, please contact White at telephone 234-6547.

IT'S CABALEN

From Page 28

after beating Bicol Express-RNV Construction 53-44.

First Game

UFO All-Stars 53—Mendiola 20, Malasarte 13, Pardinan 10, Gatdula 6, Canedo 4.

Bicol-RNV Construction 44—Jugos 15, Aldan 10, Abadilla 6, Lopez 6, Miday 5, Mumar 2.

Second Game

Cabalen-RP Construction 121—Mendoza 25, Delos Reyes 35, Ocampo 13, Alipio 12, Arnedo 12, Jo. Gatdula 6, Magcalas 5, Sinca 3, Barbo 2.

SIP-Verizon 103—R. Alegre 19, Mendoza 18, Guiab 14, Factor 13, Rapanut 13, Villacrusis 9, T. Alegre 7, Tamondong 5, Flores 3, Garcia 2.

Scoring by quarters: 24-27, 59-50, 90-79, 121-103.

Sequioco tops Tuesday pool

By MARK RABAGO
REPORTER



Boyet Sequioco put together another perfect run last Tuesday to win the Round Two 8-Ball Fun Tournament that evening at the pioneering sports bar.

The Olangapo, Zambales native triumphed three straight times after getting a bye in the opening round then turned back a courageous effort by Ike Celis to win the Tuesday 8-ball plum.

Sequioco first victimized Cherish Reyes in the second round before getting the better of Celis in the next round. He then slammed perennial pool winner Manny Mariano in the winners' bracket final to secure the first finals berth and the all-important twice-to-beat advantage.

Celis, for his part, had to work double time after being relegated to losers' bracket play by the crafty Sequioco.

The silver-haired Celis rebounded quickly and nicely by first beating Round Two owner Don Pangelinan. He then eliminated top lady player Rosemarie Moses-Arnold before moving on to the losers' bracket final opposite Mariano.

The outing against Mariano was where Celis truly shone, as the veteran pool player shocked the Filipino cue artist and ar-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left: Third place Manny Mariano, Round Two 8-Ball Fun Tournament champion Boyet Sequioco, and runner-up Ike Celis.

ranged a championship round meeting with third round conqueror Sequioco.

Unfortunately for Celis his sparkling run apparently ran out in the deciding match against Sequioco, allowing the Hafa Adai security guard to come away with the weekly pool title. He won a handsome trophy and the \$40 top prize for his efforts.

Celis settled for the \$25 runner-up purse, while Mariano took home the \$15 third place prize.

All three men also got souvenir caps from Pacific Trading Co.

Other billiard players that graced the Tuesday 8-ball competition were Gary Ridley, Lars and Palacios.

The Round Two 8-Ball Tournament is held every Tuesday starting at 8pm and has an entry fee of \$10.

Round Two also regularly hosts two other pool tournaments through the course of the week. Its winner-take-all pool tourna-

ment is held every Sunday starting at 1pm and costs \$5 to join.

On Thursdays, Round Two holds the exciting Miller Lite Invitational 8-Ball Tournament starting at 8pm. Entry fee is \$15 on regular days but goes up to \$25 every last Thursday of the month.

For more information on Round Two's tournaments, please contact Don Pangelinan at 234-6930.

ROCBALL

From Page 28

program, which features shows on different sports from around the world, would like to attain footage, pictures, and information of Rocball for airing.

Feger also confirmed that he will send a couple of videotapes, information about the history of the sport, rules, and several articles and news clippings to Chimienti.

Eurosport reaches over 95 million homes in 54 countries.

Also being attracted to the sport is Brian Meredith, an operation manager for CrackerJax, a sports-theme amusement park in Scotts-

dale, Arizona.

Meredith stated in his letter to Feger that he is currently searching for ways to make their three volleyball courts useful, and was intrigued after coming across some information about Rocball while browsing through the Internet.

Meredith added that he is trying to modify the courts to Rocball standards and is working towards starting a Rocball league.

"I can't believe that nobody in America plays this sport," Meredith stated.

Last year, Feger scheduled a special match featuring 2001 and 2002 champions DX and Jammers, which was taped and sent to the Fox Sports Show "You

Gotta See This." Fox Sports Show's Associate Producer Eric Hopkins expressed his interest in the sport. Camera crews were set up at courtside and on the roof of the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

He also sent a couple of videotapes, written information, and graphics to the Rocball Federation of India.

In related news, the World Organized Rocball Inter-scholastic and Community League's 2004 season is set to get underway on January 12.

Teams will engage in several practice rounds prior to seeing battle in the preliminary rounds, which is expected to kick off just a couple of weeks later.

All interested players are encouraged to begin organizing squads for the league, which unlike other sporting events, doesn't require an entrance fee.

All matches will be played at the Marianas High School Green Court. Should Mother Nature interrupt with wet showers, matches will be played at the school's gym.

Feger began organizing and writing about the sport while in Japan in 1979. After two years of experimenting, the sport finally progressed into a tournament in 1983.

For more information, please contact Feger at 664-3810 or 288-8722.

LOVE

From Page 28

ies on the next two holes, then easily reached the par-5 11th with a 5-iron to set up his fourth straight birdie.

"I had my pompoms out, cheering him on," Woods said. "I told him on the 10th tee I was two ahead. He said, 'How's that?' I told him I was getting a stroke a hole."

Love smiled when asked about Woods' comments.

"I didn't want to stick my hand in the cage and ask him if he wanted strokes," Love said.

Indeed, Love put seven shots between him and Woods over the first nine holes, and it left himself in great position to become

the first repeat winner of the Target World Challenge since Woods created it five years ago.

Love won in 2000 with a 64 in the final round.

It would be a great way to end his best season on tour. Love won four times, and no victory bigger than his final-round 64 at The Players Championship on a cold, windy day at Sawgrass.

While this tournament only counts in the bank - \$1.2 million of the \$5 million purse going to the winner - a victory would be meaningful coming against a 16-man field of high-ranked players and three of the four major champions.

Plus, Love has played the last two rounds with Woods, a situa-

tion that in the past hasn't allowed him to play his best.

Love has worked all year to worry about only his own game. In fact, he was having dinner with friends Friday night when they told him to beat Woods.

"K.J. is the guy to beat right now," Love said. "People don't see it the way we do. You've got to beat the golf course."

Harrington missed a 3-foot par putt on the final hole for a 70 and was in third place at 211, six shots behind. Masters champion Mike Weir, who opened with a 75, had a 3-under 69 and was at 212.

Choi is making his first appearance in the final event of the year, and would like nothing bet-

ter to end his season with a victory - even though it doesn't count in the record books and won't get him back to Kapalua.

"It would be even better ... because of the field," Choi said.

Catching up to Love could require a great round, especially the way Love is playing. The calm, warmer conditions allowed the ball to travel farther and the power hitters to play more aggressively.

Love's only bogey came on a three-putt from 15 feet, when his eyes saw only the hole and not the speed of the putt; he ran it 8 feet by and missed the par putt.

"Other than that, I felt like I could make birdie on every hole," Love said. "And I almost did."



Trail Blazers defeat the Lakers, 112-108

Damon Stoudamire hit two 3-pointers in the final minutes and the Portland Trail Blazers handed the Los Angeles Lakers their second loss in two nights with a 112-108 victory Saturday night.

25

Saipan Tribune Sports

Sequioco tops Tuesday pool

Boyet Sequioco put together another perfect run last Tuesday to win the Round Two 8-Ball Fun Tournament that evening at the pioneering sports bar.

27



28 MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2003

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

It's Cabalen against Visminda

By MARK RABAGO
REPORTER

RP Construction dethrones SIP, 121-103

Cabalen-RP Construction reaffirmed their mastery over SIP-Verizon dethroning the three-time defending champion with a 121-103 rout Sunday night that secured them a finals ticket opposite Visminda-Country House in the 2003 UFO Miller Lite Cup championship.

The Transamerica-backed squad atoned for a shaky start, which had them trail SIP-Verizon 27-24 after the opening quarter, with a terrific second quarter.

Big man Ronald Delos Reyes, the goat in Cabalen's 103-108 loss to Visminda last week, came back strong and hit a couple of triples in the second stanza to start the fireworks for Cabalen.

Youthful center Ryan Mendoza, meanwhile, complemented Delos Reyes' sharp-shooting ways by scoring 12 points from point blank range also in the second quarter.

The combination of efficient outside shooting and strong inside play translated to a 59-50 halftime advantage for Cabalen.

SIP-Verizon, whose players

came in late due to a mix-up in scheduling, continued to take on water and struggled mightily in the second half.

Cabalen's aggressive game had their opponents on the defensive during the early part of the third period. Another 3-pointer by Delos Reyes at the 8:03 mark of the quarter gave Cabalen its biggest lead so far at 68-54.

A few plays later, Mendoza struck again on the inside to pad their edge further at 72-54 with 6:47 remaining in the period.

Following a putback by Delos Reyes on a miss free throw off a 3-point opportunity by Mendoza, the score stood at 89-68 with less than two minutes left in the third.

But SIP-Verizon was far from gone and retaliated with an 11-3 burst to close the quarter that cut their deficit to 90-79.

Cabalen's Mendoza also chipped in to SIP-Verizon's cause, inadvertently making a layup on SIP-Verizon's basket after an inbound play following a timeout with 31 ticks to go.

The big end-game rally, however, didn't materialize for SIP-Verizon as Cabalen thwarted all

attempts at an uprising and maintained their healthy lead all throughout the final quarter.

There were still a lot of scary moments though. With Cabalen up 96-84, SIP-Verizon forward Gary Rapanut missed a routine layup that could've cut the lead to 10 points.

At the 5:31 mark of the game Edsel Mendoza missed two tries from the free throw line and in the succeeding SIP-Verizon offensive, newly arrived Leo Factor missed the bonus free throw on a 3-point play that could've slashed Cabalen's lead again to 10 points.

With SIP-Verizon still within striking distance swingman Junar Guiab was hit with his fifth personal foul with 4:05 to go. Shortly after Factor followed him to the showers.

Playing-coach Rick Alegre's coast-to-coast layup made it 108-97 with 2:52 left in the game but that appeared to be SIP-Verizon's last gasp as Cabalen went on a 9-2 tear highlighted by an off-balanced 3-point play by Randy Arnedo that, for all intents and purpose, sealed the game at

117-99 with 1:33 remaining.

Mendoza earned Miller Lite MVP of the Game honors after scoring 35 points, which was the same output submitted by Delos

Reyes. Veterans Alex Ocampo, Jun Alipio

added 13 and 12 points, respectively.

Rick Alegre topscored for SIP-Verizon with 19 points. Edsel Mendoza chipped in 16 points and Guiab 14 before fouling out.

In the first game, the UFO All-Stars finally notched a win See ITS CABALEN on Page 27



Rocball gains interest yet again

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER



Saipan's very own sport, Rocball, is steadily gaining more interest from the outside world.

This was learned late last week after founder and organizer James Feger announced that he has received e-mails from a couple organizations, Eurosport TV and a sports amusement park in Arizona, interested in gaining more information about the sport.

Eurosport, the most widely available sports channel in Europe, has made contact with Feger and has shown interest in learning more about the sport for future broadcasting.

In an e-mail letter to Feger, Pablo Chimienti of Eurosport's weekly program WATTS, wrote that that the See ROCBALL on Page 27

Love pulls away from Tiger at Sherwood

By DOUG FERGUSON
AP GOLF WRITER



THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (AP)—Davis Love III made four straight birdies to leave Tiger Woods in the dust and pull away from a world-class field Saturday, finishing with a 9-under 63 to build a three-shot lead in the Target World Challenge.

Despite a bogey on the par-3 17th, Love tied the tournament record set last year by Pdraig Harrington in the third round. Harrington built a record six-shot lead and hung on to win against Woods.

Love, at 11-under 205, only had a three-shot margin over K.J. Choi (65), although he won't have to worry about Woods.

As most of the leaders were posting birdies on a sunny, benign afternoon at Sherwood, the tournament host gave up ground with a three-putt bogey on No. 3



Tiger Woods reacts to his approach shot on the 18th hole during the third round of the Target World Challenge, Saturday, Dec. 13, 2003, in Thousand Oaks, Calif.

and then hit his tee shot into the water for a bogey on the next hole.

Woods lost all hope on the final hole, hitting off the pine

straw and coming up well short, into the water, and he had to make a 15-footer for bogey. He had a 72 and was nine shots back at 214.

Meanwhile, Love played some of his best golf since early in the year.

"I was confident all day," Love said. "I'm getting more and more comfortable playing with Tiger and around the lead."

Love was tied with Choi and Justin Leonard when his 4-iron on the difficult par-3 8th climbed just enough to hop into the fringe and stop about 6 feet above the hole for one of only two birdies in the round.

Love holed putts of 20 feet and 15 feet for bird- See LOVE on Page 27

